THE

MAYOR OF WINDGAP.

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THE MAYOR OF WIND-GAP

AND

CANVASSING.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE



MAYOR OF WIND-GAP.

CHAPTER I.

THE dreadful voice in her ear, threatening her with destruction if she did not remain quiet, nearly deprived Grace Carroll of her senses. Implicit obedience to its command she was, however, able to determine upon; and she, therefore, continued for a considerable lapse of time, lying upon the floor, where, with her mouth tightly muffled, her elbows pinioned, and her ankles and knees well tied up, she had been flung by her rude assaulters. As still as if she were in her coffin, indeed, Grace lay; and, mentally

overwhelmed beneath the hugeness of her terror, her mistress was absolutely carried out of the chamber without the poor girl's knowledge of the fact. Selfishness altogether monopolized her feelings.

At length, however, her consternation began slightly to decrease. She became sensible that a dead silence reigned around her; and then arose a recollection of Anny; and the thought, having once gained admission into her mind, was too engrossing to be dismissed. She ventured to move her head from one side to another, and thus enabled herself to take a piecemeal survey of the room; a candle, prematurely wasted away to the socket by an enormous thief, flickered on the chimney, affording, however, sufficient light for Grace's purposes. Her mistress was no where to be seen.—Her mistress was gone!—was forced away from her!—And all Grace Carroll's merely selfish terrors vanished.—After many efforts, and after repeatedly rolling about the floor, like

a fettered calf, she succeeded in gaining a sitting posture; then she ingeniously unloosed the bandage from her mouth; and, finally, her cries and yells resounded through the house.

In a few minutes, all the inmates of the establishment, with one exception, were before her. They unbound Grace; but, for some time, she could assert nothing but that her young mistress was in the hands of that terror of maidens, and walking challenge to all true knights, the strange Man of the Inch. How did she know that? She was sure of it. How was she sure of it? Because she was. — And no farther could Grace go.

The nervous, if not hypocondriacal, Mr. Kennedy was scarce able to do more than tremble and lament with the females of his household; and the task of eliciting from the half-crazed Grace Carroll something like an intelligible account of the misfortune she so clamorously proclaimed, devolved

upon Joseph Fitzgerald, his aged and demure butler.

In answer to the questions of this individual, she still positively asserted that the strange Man of the Inch, in his proper person, had entered the apartment, leading on twelve men, at least, all, as well as himself, with visages on their faces.

Joseph Fitzgerald interrupted her to ask how, if the strange Man had worn a vizor, could she be so very sure of his features?

"How? was it how that happened, they were for asking her? Sure, if a body would know him before that night, with the visage on that he always wore over more than a good half of his face, wasn't it the aisiest thing in life to know him, every bit as well, when he only dhrew it over the other half? More be token, what other livin' tory, on the face of the earth, *could* snap up her young misthress from her?"

Now, Joseph Fitzgerald had certain

misgivings that another person might prove, notwithsanding all this reasoning, to be Anny's abductor; and he felt great relief in consequence; for, if he were right, Anny's lot was not so hopeless a one as that insisted upon for her, by her distracted attendant.

He had understood that young George Blundell was a rejected lover. Upon the evening when Anny had refused to grant him an interview, he had seen him rush out of the house; and was shocked and alarmed at the black expression of the young man's countenance, believing it, at the time, to indicate an innate character, capable of any act of desperation. Upon his departure from Anny, after the last recorded conversation between them, honest Joseph had also encountered George; and though his brow did not wear a continued fierceness of threat, still, it was far from being as calm as, for general peace-sake, it ought to have been:—and he had not since been near the

house, nor sent a message, nor a letter,—and that looked bad. Besides, it was more natural and probable that he should be the offender in this present instance, than a man who, tainted as his public character might be, had not, to Joseph's knowledge, ever beheld his young lady. Under all the circumstances, the butler's suspicions fastened on George Blundell; and if he could make out and prove his case, no great calamity had occurred, after all. Miss Anny had only been run away with by a man she loved dearly, in her heart, whatever lovers' nonsense had set them quarrelling of late; and, no doubt, the boy would marry her, and then every thing would go right, again!

With this end in view, Joseph Fitzgerald cross-questioned Grace Carroll, hoping to shake her testimony, as to the undoubtable presence of the strange Man, on the late occasion. But, upon this point, Grace was invulnerable; nay, she now began to

add, to her former assertions, that it was the strange Man, himself, who had carried Anny down stairs, in his arms, all the time that she, the witness, saw him as plain in the back, "as ever she saw a pot of potatoes film on the fire." (It is evident that either Grace is, or that we are, the utterer, or the utterers of a bouncing imagination.)

Joseph changed his ground of attack. Had she any knowledge of the faces, or persons, of any other man of the party?

"Musha, no; the fright was too big, in her eyes, to let her mind any one but the strange man, and her poor young misthress."

"Was she positively sure that young Mr. Blundell had not been in the room?"

Grace, with a sudden catching of breath, dropped her jaw, rolled her eyes, and remained cogitatively silent: she had heard nothing of George Blundell's explanation with Anny, but she *had* seen him, upon more than one occasion, in company with the strange Man of the Inch. Juff Carroll in-

sisted, and Grace firmly believed, that he had assisted the strange man in forcing away her cousin Peggy; and, no doubt, as all the world said, they were associates in every crime. And having rapidly called all this to mind, how Grace did begin to wonder at herself, aloud, for not having before recollected all that she really and truly had seen! In fact, a new and convincing light broke upon her as she added, "Och, vourneens! I'm a fool of the world, for, now that the senses are coming back to me, I'm as good as book-sure that it *was* Mr. George Blundell, his own self, that whispered them wicked words about the turkey into my ear! Wouldn't I know his voice from a thousand, as good rights I have?"

But proofs for his purpose, better than those which Grace had given, awaited the sagacious Joseph. Bellowings of a human voice were, at this instant, heard distinctly, though remotely, in the lower, and more remote parts of the premises.

It has been mentioned that, when Grace loudly invoked the attention of the household, only one individual of it had failed to attend her summons. This was a man who slept on the kitchen suite of the establishment. He was the same who has been mentioned by Mr. Kennedy in his narrative to Anny; the bearer, in fact, some twenty years before the time of the present scene of our tale, of the unauthenticated message from his then master, young Henry Stokesbury, to Connor Kennedy, which directly caused all the dreadful events that followed the marriage of Harry's protegè with Mary Bryan. We need not remind the reader that, from motives of christian charity, upon the acknowledgment of his error; from pity for his destitute situation, as well as from a wish to be a friend to any one, even the humblest person who had been connected with his cousin, Mr. Kennedy, at least, according to his own statement, bad, some short time ago, taken Patrick

Donnelly into his employment, and Joseph Fitzgerald decided that it was the voice of Patrick Donnelly, which now attracted general attention; and he was right. He descended with others, and found Patrick bound to his bedstead; a piece of wood and a strip of his bed-clothes lying near to him, which, he said, he had just been enabled to force out of his mouth. He was set at liberty, and interrogated, and his answers greatly raised the hopes of Joseph Fitzgerald. Patrick Donnelly had retired to rest early. He had been awakened from his sleep by a consciousness of personal violence. Before he could defend himself he had been so effectually manacled and gagged, like poor Grace, above stairs, that he became incapable of giving any resistance, or even of alarming the house. But, during his short and vain struggle with his captors, a black vizor had fallen from one of their faces, and, by the light of a lantern, held by another, he distinctly recog-

nized George Blundell; as to the strange Man of the Inch, he could only speak by surmise; the lantern had not happened to have flashed upon the features of any other person of the party, except those of George Blundell; but he had heard of the strange Man of the Inch, as every body had; and, according to the different descriptions conveyed to him, from one source or another, it might be, that one individual, answering in height, in manner, and in general expression, to that formidable fright, seemed to have had command over the rest. But still, Patrick would not swear to this as distinctly as he could to the identical presence of George Blundell.

Joseph Fitzgerald very naturally made light of the presumptive case against the strange man, even upon the joint shewing of Grace and Patrick, and became assured on the contrary, from their corroborative evidence, that George Blundell was still the object of his legal pursuit.

The two trusty servants, Joseph and Patrick, proceeded to ascertain, as a preliminary step to justice, in what manner entrance had been effected. In the rear of Mr. Kennedy's house was an extensive yard, surrounded by high walls. A door opened into it from a lane, passing by one of those walls. It appeared evident that that wall had been scaled; that some one had descended into the yard, and forced back the lock of the door, and removed its heavy wooden cross bolt. The lock of the door, leading from the yard to the kitchen of the house, had been cut away by a hand saw, as the observers were enabled immediately to decide, and from the outside, too. It was also evident that the burglars must have known that Donnelly slept in the first quarter of the residence, entered by them; and that, therefore, he had first been overpowered, secured, and silenced, in order to save them interruption in their progress to the upper regions of the house. We have

been minute in the detail of these circumstances for the purpose of making the reader understand, in every way, how suspicion fastened upon George Blundell.

It is necessary, also, to take into consideration that, reckoning from the moment of Grace Carroll's selfish lethargy, and allowing for the time consumed in prevailing upon her to account for her cries, and her position, as also for that wasted in the investigation we have just recorded, more than four hours had now elapsed, since Miss Kennedy's abduction, before any vigorous steps were even resolved upon, for bringing her home again.

Now, however, the first proceeding decided upon by Joseph Fitzgerald was that of seeking out, and securing, Mr. George Blundell. For this, a legal warrant to arrest his person, as soon as possible, became necessary. It was indispensible for Mr. Kennedy to give his name and his countenance to the measure; and, though

with much nervousness and trepidation, he yielded to Joseph's hint.

The house in which George Blundell lodged was, as may be recollected, almost exactly opposite to Mr. Kennedy's; and at the moment that Mr. Kennedy and his party had passed their own threshold, a tall figure, muffled in a loose outside coat, was in the act of opening, with a latch-key, the confronting door. All paused, to observe this person's motions. His key having performed its convenient office, he cautiously half pushed back the door, and having stolon into the passage, secured it after him.

It was determined that, until the ends of justice should be attained, this person ought to be watched.—Patrick Donnelly volunteered to stand as sentinel on the house, promising that, if he should attempt to re-issue into the street, he would secure him at any risk. This suggestion was adopted; and, leaving Patrick upon his post,

Joseph Fitzgerald, accompanied, we may say, by Mr. Kennedy, and other subalterns, proceeded to take legal measures for arresting George Blundell.

They bent their steps to the residence of the Mayor of the city. They knocked loud and long at his shop-door, the only one which gave entrance to his house; their summons was not speedily answered, as his worship and his only maid-servant were sound sleepers. When he did appear behind the bench of justice,—his counter—it first became indispensible he should try, by rubbing and scooping into his eye-sockets, with his fat knuckles, to divert his still somniferous inclinations. Before this process, words had been addressed to his ears, but he really heard them not.

When partially awakened, the Mayor listened very patiently, and, if one might judge by the staring of his large, globular, grey eyes, very attentively, also, to Joseph Fitzgerald's statement. But whether it

arose from some incontinuous circuitude in the structure of his ear, or from some knot or twist of the optic nerve,—(the cellular membrane is left quite out of the question) —his worship failed to catch the subject submitted to him. He appeared, indeed, sadly puzzled how to act. Seeming to ponder and analyze, he took off his red night-cap, and with it rubbed his bald pate, as if, by a scientific process, he would elicit, with its friction against the polished globe, some sparks of "wisdom and discretion." But the machine would not work. He then turned an imploring look on Mr. Kennedy; but that gentleman's silent tears still more chilled his powers of mechanical comprehension, as atmospheric-damp neutralizes the real electric apparatus. His glance next slowly sought the face of Joseph Fitz-gerald; inquietude, impatience, and even repulsion, were expressed thereon. In fact, finding no conductor to the surface of his cranium, he heaved a long, long sigh, and

exclaimed —"Oh! my gracious! —I wish that Roger was here!"

Roger was accordingly sent for; and in a reasonable time made his appearance. The arrangement of his attire bespoke a hasty toilette. The long queue of his wig dangled over one shoulder;—the back peak of his cocked-hat was before; he held his great sword in one hand, and his huge cudgel in the other; the knees of his small-clothes were unbuttoned; and his unstockinged splay-feet, supporting his lean, hairy, spindle shanks, had been hastily thrust into untied brogues.

His worship passed to Roger his own general recollections of what had been stated to him; but, in fact, he did no more than if he had handed to his officer, from off the shelf at his back, for the purpose of setting it right, one of his own tangled skeins of half-penny blay thread. Joseph Fitzgerald was obliged to repeat, for the ears of the pompous Roger Divey, a story

which he had previously made plain enough.

The result was that, with great alacrity on the part of Roger, a warrant for the apprehension of George Blundell became quickly and duly perfected; and, courageously buckling on his rapier, Roger, aided by two inferior officers, and followed by Joseph Fitzgerald, proceeded to execute it.

Donnelly was found faithfully on his post.—Roger had now no necessity to inflict upon the lion-faced knocker, the outrage that, upon a former occasion, he had thought himself bound to do. The servant girl was in the act of undoing the shutters of the lower windows; she had previously left open the hall-door. Without a word, Roger, attended by his followers, gained an entrance. Somehow or other, he had before now become acquainted with the statistics of the premises; and he and his little band proceeded, therefore, up stairs, and without

ceremony burst into George Blundell's sleeping chamber.

At the noise they made, the young man started up, sat upon the side of his bed, and gazed upon his intruders. He was almost dressed; evidently he had been asleep in his clothes, of which some portions were soiled with mire. Roger Divey quickly pointed out these ominous appearances; as also a loose outside coat, a slouched hat, and a mask, which lay tossed on a chair.

It would seem that George Blundell's first impulse had been to rush forward and question the rude disturbers of his slumbers; but it was now apparent that as soon as he recognised the officers of justice, he recoiled and sat still, as if checked by some embarrassing fear.—"Oh! my God!" they heard him ejaculate, although in a low tone—"what can this mean, so soon?"

"Misther Blundell, I beg it of you, in

honour of the Lord," began Joseph Fitzgerald, anxiously pressing forward.

"I say, you man, you, d'ye see me," interrupted Roger Divey, authoritatively pushing him back;—"keep yourself to yourself; and let there be none to the fore but party and party—as ye shall all answer the conthrary, at your peril—;" and Roger domineeringly cleared the room of every one but himself and its proprietor, and secured the door as carefully as he could.

"Isn't this a purty kittle o' fish, my young masther?" he resumed, facing round to George Blundell, assuming his fullest air of dignity—"soh!—the game was not fine enough for you, at Guff Carroll's, d'ye see me?"

"What is your charge, now, my good fellow?" questioned George Blundell.

"What's the charge, now?—By vartue o' the good oath I have taken, 'tisn't undher every stone you may kick up, that

you'll find the body able to bring you clane out of it. Bud there is one honest man to make the venthre for you, howsomever; an', someway or somehow, we--we know where we stand, when we are on our legs, God bless 'em."

"I have little doubt of your talents, in any case," said George, "but I only wish to hear you state, at once, your present accusation against me."

Roger sunk his official voice into an approach to social condescension, and, taking a chair, half-smiled, and bent himself forward, as he continued:

"The week that's gone by, d'ye see me, a raal tory, d'ye see me, thro' an' thro', came afore his worship an' myself—long may his worship reign!—an' the name he had on him was *Shawn-a-fuustha*;—an' he was brought to us by a man o' the Dunns; and that man wanted to make it as clear as a whistle that Shawn had a way of ating mutton that never hard the

noise o' the butcher knife, rubbing to his steel; an' he thried to down-face the mayor an' myself, d'ye see me, that the sheep he found, 'wid the skhin on id, undher my poor Shawn's roof, was a sheep of his own, by rason that it had his mark tarred on id. Bud, Shawn spoke wid one Roger Divey; an' sure it turned out, in the long run, that poor *Shawn-a-faustha*, was a born-nathril * widout the wit to stale a *thraneen* out of a field, not to talk of a clever, active sheep, that 'ud be runnin' about the field, on his fawr legs;—an', anyhow, no one that hard Shawn spakin' could think he ever had an ounce o' sinse in his head; an' so, d'ye see me, Masther Blundell, we proved that the sheep, into the bargain, was a poor fool of a sheep, just like Shawn; and that she wouldn't stay in Dunn's fields, but made her way out of it, not knowin' where she was goin', or what she was doin'; an' ran into

* Simpleton.

Shawn's cabin, an' happened to fall upon the bill-hook, an' kilt herself."

During this wily appeal for a heavy retaining fee, George Blundell's thoughts had lapsed into a train of agonized reflection, so that not an echo of Roger's voice intelligibly reached his ear. It was only when the man stopped speaking that he awoke to a sense of the necessity of again addressing him.

"But you have not yet told me the nature of the charge brought against me."

"By vartue o' the oath, d'ye see me, it was asy enough to put off poor Juff Carroll at a nonplush; but, it would give work to a raal counshellor to make the right appear against Connor Kennedy; he is a knowin' ould pet-fox."

"Connor Kennedy? what of him?" demanded George Blundell.

"Why barrin' there's one to make the right appear against him, it wouldn't be pleasant to kiss the book on the wrong side;

and to prove that there was no burglary at his dour an' no takin', forcin', an' carryin' away, *why at arums,* a body that goes by the name of his daughther, Misthress Anna Kennedy, spinsther, d'ye see me?"

George Blundell started up, and—

"Heaven and earth, have I understood you?" he said: "do you assert that Miss Kennedy has been forced from her father's house?"

Roger laughed quietly, incredulously, and peace-makingly, as upon former occasions he had been in the habit of doing, at the first vain attempt to disavow guilt, on the part of undoubted offenders, against the law.

"I say, my young Masther, d'ye see me, is it an *omadhaun* * is in my coat?"

"Answer my question!" resumed George Blundell, in a loud overbearing voice.

"Whoo!—pallaloo! sure he wants to frighten us now, entirely, like others I have

* Fool.

known before him in the same purty condition!" said Roger sneeringly; "and so, my young genteel, you purtend not to know that Miss Anny Kennedy was forced, and taken and carried away, long afore day-break this morning? and may be you won't look at that?" drawing a paper out of his bosom, "and may be you wouldn't see, into the bargin, that it's a warrant, made out by his worship and myself, to make a caption o' you, your own self—for the same?"

George Blundell snatched up the paper; read it frowningly; groaned aloud; flung himself into his bed, and muttered "All is right—proceed in your business."

"Maning to say that you're ready to go before his worship?" demanded Roger.

"Yes, meaning to say exactly that."

"And who's to plade for you, my young squire? where is the fee to bring you out o' your throuble?"

"Do your duty, and curse you! I have no money to give you:" answered George.

Roger immediately summoned his assistants; they were quickly by his side. At first, the captured man did not seem to heed any thing around him. After a pause, however, he was heard to say, in a low voice, "Father, father!" and then suddenly changed into high passion—"but no—after all your promises, you are not a father to me! Oh Anny, Anny! all this is too horrible! When, or how can I rejoin you, now? Oh! —thus—thus it is easy!"—he sprang towards the door, seemingly unconscious of any one's presence: but he found himself interrupted.

"Give way there, at your peril!" he cried aloud.

Roger technically touched him on the shoulder, and arrested him as the king's prisoner — and Roger's myrmidons closed round him; and when he offered violence, overpowered and secured him. In fact, George Blundell behaved too furiously; the swords of the town bailiffs were drawn;

and bleeding from many, though slight, wounds, he was eventually led away captive.

The rumour of Anny Kennedy's abduction soon spread wide and far; a magistrate of some intelligence — a man, indeed, of *some* "wisdom and discretion," came to the aid of the Mayor of the town, and George Blundell was brought before their worships.

The proofs of at least participation in the legal offence became satisfactorily established against him. To say nothing of Grace Carroll, Patrick Donnelly swore that George Blundell was one of those who had bound and gagged him; and the circumstances of his stealthy entry into his lodgings about day-break; the finding the loose outside coat, the slouched hat, and the mask upon the chair in his bed-room; and last, though not least, his having gone to bed without fully undressing, together with the soils upon the clothes he had slept in, formed strong corroborative testimony—

neither did any one forget that in just such a coat, hat, and mask, each of the abductors had entered the premises of Connor Kennedy.

George Blundell vainly tried to shatter or shake the chain of evidence wound around him. Indeed, he met legal proofs with nothing but angry or impassioned assertions. He proclaimed his innocence; he clamoured to be set free, vehemently and absurdly pledging life and honour and swearing to the pledge by the most awful name that Anny Kennedy should quickly be restored to her guardian, were she to be found on the face of the earth. The directing magistrate naturally regarded all this but as a boyish *ruse* to escape the consequences which hung over the prisoner's head, scornfully expressing his wonder at the silliness, which would expect, or even seem to expect, that such proposals should be complied with.

Mr. Connor Kennedy was present dur-

ing the investigation. He sat alone and apart, still shedding tears, rocking his person to and fro, and not uttering a word. George Blundell fixed his eye upon him; appealed to him for protection or confidence, and asked him to become legal security for his re-appearance, provided he were allowed to issue forth on his quixotic expedition for the recovery of Anny; but Mr. Kennedy would not raise up his eyes, and, in addition to his former gesticulation, only clasped his hands together. In fact, George Blundell was fully committed to prison.

CHAPTER II.

FOR a good distance, the way taken by Anny Kennedy, or rather by her self-elected guardians, was a long, rough, bye-road; then, much to her personal relief, though she cared little about it, after rolling over soft turf, the car stopped. A solitary mud cabin, one of those inhabited by the very poorest of the peasantry, appeared before Anny; and she was lifted down from her chariot of little ease, and carried through its low door-way into the interior apartment; two miserable chambers forming the

whole of the space, which its tattered thatched roof covered.

Here was a single dipt-candle; the earthen floor was uneven and unswept; the mud-walls were damp and bare; rafters and wattles, blackened by smoke, canopied Anny's head; and the only furniture consisted of two ricketty, rush-bottomed chairs, and a bedstead to match.

Her conductors half-thrust her into the cheerless place, and then retired, securing, as well as it permitted, the door upon her. For a moment she stood in the middle of the floor, still pinioned and gagged. A woman, wrinkled, and of a bad countenance, entered, and, with a hand somewhat less rough than those which had last ministered about Anny's person, restored her to the use of her limbs and her tongue.

Could horror agreeably or fitly be expressed by a young and lovely face and form, Anny Kennedy might now be taken as a personification of it, as, first glaring

fearfully around, her eyes finally fastened on those of her new attendant.

"Are you of my own sex?" she asked, in a beseeching, hopeless tremour of look and manner.

"You 'ax me that," answered the woman, "because the wrinkles are on my face, and because its fatures are hard-grained and forbidin', but there was a time when my cheek was smooth and rosy, and my eye bright and good-humoured, and my lip red, and my foot light; and then I was blithe, and used to sing and laugh, as the others did, when we all went out a-maying; but I am changed now; changed before my time; wrinkled before my time; aye, and I know that something is come into my face, too, that was not in it at first; and although I have strength enough to run, I can't do it; the heart weighs me down; it is as heavy as lead; and it is rotten with sin."

"But still it is a woman's heart? It has

still something of a woman's nature left in it."

"Not a bit, I fear, not a bit; I am a devil on the face of the earth, hastening on to my grave, and afeard of the world to come."

"You have been sinful," continued Anny, touching, though against her will, the wretch's shoulder, "you have been sinful, and sin has brought you sorrow?"

"Worse than sorrow, it has brought me, young mistress; worse than sorrow, it has brought me; it has brought me the untimely wrinkles, and the despair."

"Then save a fellow-creature from sin, from sorrow, and from despair, such as you now know and feel;" pleaded Anny—"were you the most sinful being that ever outraged heaven, heaven is good! One act of christian charity, such as I implore at your hands, may bring upon your soul the grace of repentance, and then the grace of a forgiv-

ing God! Save me! You are still a woman I say—Save me!"

"Spake lower," hoarsely whispered the premature crone, "and mind what you spake at all; there is a guard upon the dour."

"Tell me, good woman! Oh! tell me one thing at least! in whose power am I?"

"In the power of one that never yet used his power mercifully."

"The man who is called the strange Man of the Inch?"

"Yes, asthore; its in his hands you are."

"Oh God! oh God! Oh! if there is but a drop of compassion in you, let it melt and flow for me, then! Oh woman! good, good woman, whatever is in the power of human gratitude to do, I will do for you in return! you say you have been sinful, and that you are unhappy; I will take you to my very bosom; I will call you my friend, my deliverer, my earthly saviour;

I will—humbly depending on Him for help —I will teach you to hope in God! I will pour the balm of hope, and as far as I know how, of repentance, upon the canker of sin, that you say is eating away your heart! Yes, by my prayers, I will endeavour to reconcile you with heaven; while we live together in this world, I will be the consoler, and—for Providence has given me the means to do it—the cherisher of your earthly lot! Yes, yes! and I will sooth your death-bed, too; I will whisper into your dying ear the promise of that mercy, from your God, which I now kneel to beg of you for myself!"

The woman intertwined her fingers, crossed her hands over her forehead and eyes, and sobbed.

"Oh, I see it!" pursued Anny, "compassion for a woman in misery is yet in your nature! you will—you will—be my best friend, and preserver!"

"Whist!" said the wretch, as she

hastily uncovered her face. Tears, newly struck out of the rock—her own heart—trickled through furrows made by the wrinkles that she had truly called untimely; and, as she raised her skinny finger to claim attention, her eyes fixed kindlily, humanely, and, indeed, almost with the expression of the womanly protection for which Anny had pleaded, upon her unhappy young prisoner.

"Yes, the hour of your thrial is come; but, be of stout heart; lift up your sperrits, and pray the good God you believe in!"—

The woman turned her eyes towards the croaky, creaking door; it was flung open; and the bug-bear of our tale stood within its threshold.

"And the time is come, too, to use the paper, that the Mayor of Wind-gap gave you;" whispered the woman suddenly.

"Retire!" said the strange man of the Inch, in a voice of stern and established

authority. The miserable individual he addressed did not seem to have the slightest power of daring to disobey his command. She quickly passed him, and left the apartment. He closed the door.

After the whispered hint of her late attendant, Anny recollected that, since the day — not very long ago, indeed — upon which Maurteen Maher had given her the document in question, she had taken care to keep it about her person: now, while her heart throbbed almost to bursting, and while her eye remained as if spell-bound upon the conntenance of the abhorred individual with whom she found herself alone, Anny confusedly searched for it. But, in her great agitation, as also in her womanly disinclination to manifest her actions, Anny's trembling fingers made a useless attempt.

Her companion turned round and approached her. As he advanced, she retreated, step by step.

"Now, beautiful Anny, do not shun me in this way," he said, whether in a tone of conciliation or of irony, it must have been an experienced and a nice ear which could have judged. "This is certainly not a very elegant place to pay my respects to you in; but it is by necessity, not by choice, that I meet you under its lowly roof. There was no admission for me in your own house; I would not take the liberty of inviting you to mine, as it is a bachelor's establishment, you know; and, therefore, we meet upon the first neutral ground nearest at hand; but no matter where, dearest girl, since I at last enjoy the bliss of speaking with you;—of declaring to you how much I have suffered in the want of such an opportunity, since the first blessed day my eyes rested upon you; or, indeed, as the sensible people about here say, my *one* eye,—though, perhaps, if it were necessary, I could shew, for your particular satisfaction, a pair of

them; and so, my beloved Anny Kennedy,——"

"Man!" interrupted Anny, "dreadful, though, let me tell you, not *now* dreaded, man! dare not to come near me, if you would not trample upon my corpse." Her hands were still moving rapidly about her person.

"Tut! tut! my all-beauteous queen; 'tis a sin in you, a mortal sin, to talk so; leave death to revenge himself on old age and deformity, but speak of living, and of living only, and for happiness, too, while your young bloom is upon you. Enchanting Anny! I am not the scarecrow you have been used to think I am; come, I can woo with smiles, if you wish it, as nice as any petit maître." He took her hand, and encircled her with his arm; a scream of direst agony burst from Anny.

"Be calm, dearest girl, be calm! *I* do not intend to be rough, or offensive; there, sit you down, and do not tremble so;" and

he placed her rather gently, for him, upon one of the ricketty chairs, and sat upon the other, some distance from her.

Anny glared at him with a frenzied eye, and, with both her hands, grasped her frail seat, as if it could have been a protection to her.

"Oh yes, yes, I see it;—they have been frightening you with absurd stories of me, Anny; and I told you as much at our first interview;—Oh, to be sure, the old gabblers have put it into your head, that the good, respectable devil (I always speak deferentially of every body, 'tis a safe habit), and myself have been 'hail-fellows, well-met;' but I don't recollect the exact spot of ground, or the exact ship, or even the little drinking parlour, in which we have ever yet sat down together. One thing, however, I do frankly admit;—I am, by nature, the adorer, the slave, the humblest, the most abject slave, of woman's beauty. It ever has ruled, and it now does, and it ever must,

rule my lot on earth; and if there be another, and a happier, and a pleasanter world, in that other, too; come, dearest Anny, and I call you sensible Anny, into the bargain, because I know every 'body gives you a character for understanding and intellect, beyond your years;—but, come, as one of the most buggaboo things about me, have they not told you of a one-half of my visage that is demoniacally frightful? and of a certain mark upon this cheek, which you have not yet seen?—and, yet, beautiful Anny, need I tell you, that I can refute all their gossip, as I now do their humbug tales, upon *this* score, at least? pray do look, Anny; do look up at me, and see if the mark of the devil's claw is really visible to your maiden eye."

There certainly was a smile of male coquetry in the now unclouded brow of the strange Man, as he fully unveiled his features; nor was the smile wanting in stern beauty. And gashes certainly appeared,

though at present cicatrized upon his hitherto disguised cheek; but none that could not be accounted for, by fair encounter, on the battle-field, nor reconciled with a general impression of manly comeliness. At a somewhat younger age, and without a wound, the strange Man's countenance must certainly have been handsome. As he playfully twitched off his black handkerchief, Anny's nerves quivered almost to madness, or dissolution; so confused and so enervated was her state of mind, that Grace Carroll's late anecdotes had real power over it; and she could not help expecting to see, upon the half of his face hitherto shut up (like an awkward wing of an old house, that is not to be let along with the rest of the premises), the fearful marks which her poor maid, nay, which even the strange Man himself had hinted, might be found stamped upon it. All feelings are, in their strength, relative; and when Anny discovered, however, that there was nothing

so very terrible in the appearance or expression of the whole of the strange man's features, she certainly experienced a little relief.

"Well, Anny, after all they say, am I, or am I not, a proper man enough?" again approaching her; for even the slight change in Anny's sensations did not escape his practised observation.

But now her agonies returned; nay, became augmented. Her hands suddenly ceased their rapid and nervous search, and she clasped them tightly together, as, in deep despair, she muttered to herself—

"Gone, gone, gone—and my last hope with it!"

"What is gone? and what do you mean by that pretty phrase, my beauty?" He still moved his chair; she had pushed her's close to the wall.

The smile and glance, accompanying these words, produced through Anny's frame that kind of spasmodic affection of disgust, which

might have been inspired by the sudden and near appearance of a loathsome reptile.

"Have mercy on me!" she cried, falling upon her knees.

"The rather do I ask *you* to have pity on *me*," he answered, stooping to raise her up. She rebounded to her feet, screaming forth—

"Touch me not, villain—foul villain, touch me not!—I am not weak nor unprotected, although but a girl, and alone with you.—Heaven is my strength and my protector—and will be your punisher!"—Again she retreated as far as she could from him.

"Ha! ha! by the rood, I think I am stepping back into my boyhood, when it used to be my silly creed that smiles and tears alone, to say nothing of knee-bending, were a woman's persuaders.—Ha! ha!—vanity, vanity, oh! dear vanity! thou art the last foible to abandon us!—Yes, some folly whispered to me that, forsooth, I

ought to try to flatter you into good humour;—well, no matter;—but, as the old saying goes—'One fool makes many; but the old fool is worse than any.' But now we change tack, my brisk little beauty. By Heavens! I love to grapple, either in war, or in love, with whatever promises, by a good, courageous struggle, to make victory the sweeter!—Up with speaking-trumpet, first, however, before broadsides and hangers; and so, listen to me, I say, Anny Kennedy—First, I love you;—aye, doat on you; aye, more than ever I did in my life upon girl or woman, excepting one girl, a long time ago, who can now make no question between us: or, at least, no question to my disadvantage. But that is not all—There is yet another motive which urges me to be friends with you—Your father and myself were, once upon a time, very dear friends, and—"

"Hah!" interrupted Anny, "my father

and you?—And how, then,—" and she could utter no more.

"How, then, does it follow, you would ask, that I see any reason to wish to make his daughter, also, my dear friend—aye, and upon my own terms?—I have taken the question from your own dear lips; and I will answer it—thus:—Yes, Anny Kennedy, it is exactly because your father and I were such very dear friends that your father's daughter is here, to-night."

"If you knew him so well, who was my father?"—

"Who was your father?—Who *is*, you mean?—The man who, very naturally, has brought you up; the man you live with; the man from whose house I have enticed you hither."

"He is not!—I know he is not!—You now invent a falsehood for some devilish purpose!"

"No, Anny; I am sure of what I say;

Connor Kennedy is your father; though, so closely was it his practice to keep his little amusements, that neither I nor any one else can hint to you who your mother might have been. Yes; and that same Connor Kennedy once was the dear friend I have spoken about. A reptile!—" continued the strange Man, suddenly bursting into passion, and stamping on the clay floor, while his brows became tangled into a hateful frown, his cheeks pale, his eyes flashing, his lips fiercely curving, and almost frothing—"A reptile!—First, a low, mean, crawling reptile—then, a slimy, wriggling, slippery, evading reptile—and at last, an ungrateful, base, dastardly, reptile—who, while he was nurtured *here*—here on my heart—and while I slept—trustingly, happily slept—stung me, right over that very heart—aye, shot and spat his own very venom into it, till its core and veins became poisoned—poisoned into a circulation of liquid, running fire—poisoned into rage—

into madness—into detestation of its fellow hearts-—and till, at length, it can feel no joy but of that revenge upon him, in some thing like the fashion of wrong for wrong—measure for measure!"

He strode up and down the small apartment, as might a yet untamed tiger in his new cage. Anny was terrified into absolute silence. He suddenly stopped and loodke upon her; and his features half-changed into a different though, a not less fearful expression, as he went on—

"You have heard me, Anny Kennedy!—Your father was that viper to me! after heaping kindness upon his head—and—idiot that I was!—casting my 'heart's affection, too, upon the heap—he robbed me—meanly, treacherously, robbed me of the woman whom, in early youth, I loved better than my own soul—and who, had he permitted her to become mine, might have swayed and softened that soul into something good among men—and perhaps saved it for a hereafter!—But tush, tush!—no matetr

now!—We are quits at last!—You, Anny Kennedy, stand before me—*his* daughter—Connor Kennedy's daughter!—Aye, and by Heaven, full as beautiful, and I believe as pure, as her of whom he plundered me!"

Anny's shrieks again arose terrifically.

"The paper! the paper!—" whispered a voice close at her ear. Despairing, and agonized as she was, Anny could, with an instant's glance, ascertain that the voice came through a chink in the slight and frail wall, or rather partition, at her back.—"God help me! I have it not!"—she answered, aloud.—And then her poor shrieks continued, piercing up higher and higher. The awakened ruffian held her in his grasp. Her delicate attire became discomposed; her maiden neck despoiled of its fragile covering. By a touch of her own spasmed hands, she ascertained this fact: and instantly glancing downwards, further discovered a sealed paper, half-pushing out from beneath her corset;—one moments' strength

she was then able to summon up;—nerved by it, she hurled her assaulter some distance from her;—snatched the now fully recognised document from its hiding place; stretched it forward to him at arm's length; and, panting and gasping, and swallowing down her words, said—

"Here—read this—'tis for you!"

He plucked it from her hand. She crossed her arms over her bosom, and was still able to stand upright, on her tottering limbs, watching him. It has been noticed that there was but one feeble taper in the miserable apartment. To this he went; broke the heavy and rude seal of the letter addressed to him, and began to peruse it.

Anny's eyes devoured his movements, and the expression of his features. The talisman was in his hand!—For good or for evil to her?—She saw him start—frown—look amazed and baffled — angry and tarred—incredulous and shaken——: twice he read the writing, and then hollowed

out ——"A lie!—a lie, by the heaven!—Who gave you this?"— springing back, and scowling upon Anny.

She was about to pronounce her old friend's name; but although Maurteen Maher had not formally bound her to secrecy—nay, although, in a jocose way, he had told her to give his compliments, with the letter, to the strange Man—still, a generous fear of evil result that night to him, at the hands of so desperate a character, checked her tongue, and she answered that she would not reveal who was the writer.

"What!—refuse to yield up the author of this annoying falsehood!—Do you not dread my vengeance?"

"No! I dread you, now, in nothing!"—she courageously answered:—"for, attempt to deny it, as you may—the paper tells you truth—and you know it does—and I am safe!—and I defy you!"——she sank down at last.

The ferocious, as well as strange, Man, after looking at her, scrutinizingly, and, perhaps, at last, kindly, seemed awed; at least, by her words and manner, if, indeed, they had not helped to convince him of the assertions of Maurteen Maher's epistle;—and he muttered aside—

"By the word! and that speech was not like the daughter of Connor Kennedy and some unknown obscure peasant—"

He then placed his hand upon a chair; raised it up slowly; put it down again, in the middle of the floor; sat upon it, his hands hanging by his side; and continued to gaze, attentively, if not respectfully, at Anny.

She was still sunk upon her weak limbs, powerless, but not afraid, before him; her gentle arms were still closely folded over her neck. After a pause, he arose; pushed open the crazy door, and called loudly into the other apartment — "A cup of water here!"

Immediately Anny's late attendant re-entered, with the beverage he had demanded; —"Ask that young lady to taste it," he continued:—"And, hark ye; place her cloak round her shoulders, and seat her as comfortably as you can upon the bed-side."

"I will sit up," said Anny, "if I can; but not if you approach me."

"I will not touch you, now," he answered, in a tone which Anny could not at all understand.

With the assistance of the woman, she was, however, soon disposed of at her ease, comparatively speaking.

"Leave us again—" resumed the strange Man; and, as before, his vassal hurried out of the room.

"Let her stay—let her stay!" requested Anny.

"No, if you please; for I now really wish to interchange a word with you, which no one must overhear. She is, however,

outside this door, and a loud sound of your voice may call her.—Be calmer, therefore, I entreat you;—and when I do entreat you, be assured you may be calm.—You told me, a while ago, that you were not Connor Kennedy's child. What grounds had you for saying that?"

"His own assertions," answered Anny—"which I take as the truth, sooner than those of any other living creature."

"Hum—that's nothing;—nothing at all. Has he not told you who really are your parents?"

"No; I know not, from any source of information, who are my father and mother; but I am sure that Connor Kennedy is not my father—and I am also sure that if you knew my father, as you assert, you must have known my mother too; and that, therefore, this may procure us both more particular information on the subject."

She undid from her neck the ribbon which sustained the miniature-portraits of

which mention has before been made, and handed the locket to him.

Again he hurried to the taper; again he became passionately and wildly affected; and after some time asked her,—"And from whose hand did you receive this?"

"From my mother's — on her dying bed."

"You speak the holy truth, now?"

"I do—to the utmost of my belief and knowledge."

"Well, that's enough—that must do"—he again fixed his eyes upon the locket, turning it from side to side.—He paused—he sighed—he smiled—he laughed.—He rose up deliberately, muttering—"a strange, strange world."

"Girl, I am cheated out of my revenge for the present;"—he resumed, aloud;—though, perhaps, not quite that, either; let us not conclude too hastily; we will look into this affair;—and even if my dear revenge does escape me in this shape, there

may be another road to an old,—a long-hoped object."—

Anny was left alone—she had scarce leisure to return thanks to Heaven when the priestess of these mysterious ceremonies once more re-appeared before her.

"The paper makes you quiet for the present"—she said—"God grant that things may turn up so as to keep us both quiet for the time to come!"

Tears were again in the unhappy creature's eyes: Anny threw her arms round her neck—placed her head confidingly on her sinful shoulder, and cried plentifully over the beatings of her sinful heart.

CHAPTER III.

EVEN upon occasions almost common-place to other men, George Blundell was the creature of passion. It will not therefore be wondered at that, in his present situation, he felt fearfully affected;—in fact, the world had scarcely yet tamed down, in the slightest degree, his youthful impulses to prepossession on any object. His love for Anny, and her love for him, had become the very essence of his existence. An anticipation of losing her, when only called up, in moments of real security, by self-torment-

ing fancy, had never failed to melt him into tears, or rouse him into absurd vehemence; while he used to sit, quite sure of her affections, and of her guardian's permission to visit her, alone at his winter fire-side, or upon the roots of an old tree, or upon the river's-bank, in summer.

It would therefore be difficult to describe him in his present abode. The door of his cell was closed upon him. He stood in the middle of its narrow floor. "I have lost her!" he said—"she has been forced from me for ever! and it is my father," he added, laughing idiot-like—"'tis my own father, to whom I am indebted for that!" — This idea grew into certainty, until he nearly felt the impulse to dash himself headlong against the rough walls that surrounded him. Despair—dull, dogged despair followed. Against one of those walls he now leaned his right shoulder; his arms we may say, fell from him, and hung unmoved at his sides. He

could not be said to think, or perhaps, even distinctly to feel. He subsequently called to mind, that, after his sullen, leaden fit, though at what time he could not tell, he had become suddenly, and as it were only physically impelled to rush to the door of his prison, in the mad and vague thought of bursting it open; and that then he had fallen down on his mattress, quite exhausted, and forgetful of every thing.

A night and part of a day passed on, and he seemed to sink into a gloomy, brooding, idle moroseness. Food had been offered to him, but he did not even think of it. The turnkey had appeared, and disappeared, and no word escaped his lips; nor had sleep relieved him for one instant.

It was again the noon of a day. The turnkey entered; placed a letter in his hands; and, making a sign of caution, quitted the cell.

George Blundell glanced at the superscription; and he was instantly erect on

his feet, his face flushed, and his hand trembling. Muttering its contents to himself, with dried and white lips, he hastily ran over the epistle.

"What!" he cried, "what is this? am I really the maniac wretch I have shuddered to think I might become? Have I not toiled hard to cool down my boiling blood, and to still my throbbing temples? Or have my eyes lost their power of sense? No; it is a letter, and in her hand-writing. Well; I may have misunderstood its meaning. I have been in this place for some time, without sleep or food, and perhaps am not now able to see or to understand rightly; so I will try and man myself, and then read it again."

He did so; it began,

"I am compelled to write to you by an authority which I must not gainsay—"

"Compelled to write to me? And was compulsion necessary, Anny? By an authority you must not gainsay? What au-

thority? and she was preceding the word "authority" with the term "dear," and then blotted it out. There is fearful mystery in this. But let me read on.

"And I write for the purpose of informing you that you are no longer to think of me as you have done; that, by all and every means in your power, you must expel from your heart its love for me. If I am to judge by the struggle in my own bosom, this will be a truly difficult task for you; but you are called upon to attempt it; nay, to master it. In explanation, I am permitted only to say, that I never can be your wife, for that an unpassible barrier has been suddenly placed between us. But, whatever may be the consequences, I will add that I am very, very miserable in the new circumstances which surround me. Is it not a terrible thing to feel repugnance where I am called on to bestow affection—where, indeed, it is now my duty to bestow it? For further satisfaction on this unhappy subject, I can but

refer you to him who *was* my guardian—Mr. Connor Kennedy. Farewell. Farewell.

ANNA."

Spite of continued interruptions on the part of George Blundell, we have given the remainder of this letter in an unbroken form to the reader. The nature of his interruptions will be easily guessed at, though we do not venture to define them. We can only coldly narrate certain conclusions upon which the young man's mind jumped, after fully comprehending the words—and indeed but the words alone—of what had been written to him.

A barrier? and one that he could not pass? Who dared to erect it? Who dared to say that he was unable to over-leap any barrier, no matter what in nature, which the craft, or the cunning, or the skill, or the malice, or the villany of man was capable of building up between him and his soul's idol? Tush!—Fools or scoundrels were but imposing on her fears, or her judgment.

Tush! by heaven, he thought it were an an easy thing to swim across an Atlantic without resting, or clear an Alp at a bound, so that Anny Kennedy could be made sure of at the far-side of either.

But he would still try to understand this mysterious letter.—Again, what was the nature of the barrier it spoke of? She could never be his wife. Why? George Blundell suddenly felt that he comprehended the whole question. Anny Kennedy could, now, never be his wife, only because she had become, or was about to become, the wife of another! Of what other? His father? No. Evil as was the nature of that father, a thought so horrible could not be entertained. "I refer you to him *who was* my guardian;" *who was* my guardian. And how had he ceased to be her guardian? How, but by changing his position towards her;—how, but by becoming her husband! Oh! I thank God for that thought; for now my hand can fall—unstained by a parent's

blood—upon the head of the true hypocrite, and of the true villain. Blood! did I say blood? Fie, fie; no, not that: but I will question him; I will question him: and were he coiled up tenfold in his duplicity, he must give plain answers to an outraged and most miserable creature."

George Blundell turned to the door of his cell, as if to depart; he soon became reminded that he was a prisoner, and then he again fell upon his straw, exhausted and groaning wretchedly.

For many hours, indeed, he lay as still as if life had quitted him, his blood-shot eyes vaguely fixed on a point. The turnkey again entered; he deliberately arose and demanded who had been the bearer of the letter? The man could, or would, only answer that it had been delivered at the goal door by a person unknown to him. A heavy bribe induced him, however, not only to furnish his prisoner with writing materials, but also to engage to have conveyed

to its destination a letter which George Blundell proposed immediately to begin. So, the young man wrote to Mr. Connor Kennedy; and, when the epistle was dispatched, he turned to his food and ate it voraciously.

The following were the contents of this letter:

"I presume, sir, it is not without your "knowledge that I have received to-day a "note from Anny; she who was to have "been *my* Anny; mine, by the ties of mu-"tual and admitted affection;—by mutual "pledges;—by mutual vows and oaths.—But "now she informs me that she never can "be my wife; for that 'there is an impassi-"ble barrier suddenly placed between us;' "and she instructs me to apply to you for a "full explanation of her strange and ob-"scure words. You know well, for it must "have been by your contrivance, that your "servant gave the false testimony of which I

"I am momentarily the victim;—you know "well I cannot wait upon you; and that, "therefore, my demand for an explanation "must, for the present, confine itself to "writing. But I caution you not to dally "or trifle with me. No one is better aware "than yourself how unjustly I am detained "here; but, Mr. Kennedy, as surely as I am "an innocent man, I shall speedily be free "again; and then, sir, we can meet face to "face, should your refusal to satisfy me at "present make necessary so dangerous an "interview.

"Your's,

"As you may deserve of me,

"GEORGE BLUNDELL."

In vain did the writer of this spirited epistle turn his eye to the prison door, for hours and hours after he had sent it away, in expectation of an answer. Mr. Kennedy vouchsafed no reply, either personally or in writing. George Blundell roared, and foam-

ed, and stamped, and threatened: still to no purpose. Another sleepless, horrible night passed over his head: — another wretched morning half-dawned upon him through the single iron-grated window, or rather aperture, of his cell. About noon, perhaps, his usual attendant re-appeared, placed a packet in his hand, and at once left the apartment. George Blundell eagerly tore it open. It contained a very small saw, a file, a little bottle of oil, and a note without signature or direction, and certainly not in Mr. Kennedy's hand-writing.

"If you desire to learn tidings of "Anna Kennedy, lose no time in availing "yourself of the means of escape herewith "afforded to you. With the file and the "saw cut away three of the bars of your "prison window; be sure to use the oil "freely; it will prevent noise, and facilitate "your work. Go on steadily and cautious-"ly, and you need fear no interruption. If,

"by the time your door is secured for the "night; you have succeeded, remove the "bars. You will find a ladder to the win- "dow, on the outside; descend it at once; "but take care not to do so before the hour "already specified. At the foot of the lad- "der you will meet a person awaiting you; "accost him not; don't utter a whisper; "but follow him silently, and he will lead "you to one who can fully satisfy you on "all the points you at present want to have "cleared up."

Carefully, very carefully, notwithstand- the feverish state of his mind and body, did George Blundell follow these directions of his unknown, though experienced, friend. With might and main he worked, and without an instant's cessation; and yet so stealthily that he could scarce have disturbed a mouse in his cell. Before the last nightly visit had been paid to him, his task was done; the bars being cut through,

at either side, and only artificially retained in their places; and, when his cell door was closed upon him, he quickly removed those previously formidable obstacles between him and liberty. At a glance he recognized the promised ladder: at another, though dimly seen in the dark, the promised figure of a man, at its foot. The next instant he was descending from the window; and the next was in a narrow lane which skirted the rear of the goal. And now the person who had been waiting for him stood at some distance, closely muffled up, and making signs to him to follow. Without speaking a word, as he had been instructed to do, George Blundell pursued the steps of his dumb guide, who immediately began to walk rapidly away. But before leaving the spot, he observed two other men steal towards the ladder, lower it, and hurry off with it in an opposite direction, on their shoulders.

He threaded, after his conductor, the least frequented streets which, in that

quarter of the town, led to to the suburbs. They then made a wide circuit of the environs, and, at length, without passing through the city, stopped in an obscure street, at that side of it which was opposite to, and most remote from, the prison. The man gave a single and a cautious knock at the door of a mean-looking-house; it was instantly opened. A dull lamp lighted the stair-case. The guide stood still at the bottom of the stairs, and motioned to George Blundell to ascend them. George did so, and rapidly entered a room at their head. He looked around him; he was alone; but he heard a heavy foot coming up after him; and, in a few seconds, his flashing and questioning eyes fixed upon the person of the strange Man of the Inch.

CHAPTER IV.

The youth strated back, confounded—"So, you are your own man again," observed his companion, smiling drily.

"And I owe my liberation to you—father?"

"To be sure you do; who else but a near friend would go to any trouble about you?"

"You wrote the note, and sent me the things that accompanied it?" again asked George, thoughtfully, and with a painful motive for his curiosity.

"I—I—I—and was not that said note to

the purpose? Didn't it understand business?" said the strange Man, with a strange laugh.

"May I enquire who gave you the very useful information it contained? The confidant of your plot for my escape, I suppose? The person who awaited me at the ladder's foot?"

"Do not speak 'of the *ladder's foot,*' my boy; 'tis an awkward expression. But you are right in one thing, and wrong in another; or rather you are right and wrong together. I consulted with nobody—nor was it necessary I should have done so—upon the means of getting you out of that little, high, iron-barred window —— You foolish cub!—do you think nobody ever cut through an iron-bar, before this evening, but yourself?—and as to the man who led you from that place to this, he is here with you now; for, in truth, I only shunned the eyes of the persons of this house, to take off my disguise before I would come up to

you;—because, although they are particularly in my confidence—and a good many others, too, along with them,—I don't want to make a bother about every thing."

"So then," said George, "you know all about the file, and saw, and oil, from your own experience?"

"Certainly, my lad;—and do you, at this moment, wish that I had never known any thing about them?"

George Blundell remained for some time sitting thoughtfully. Without his observation, the strange Man had closely watched him, and now he said in his most possibly-softened tone—

"I suppose you have had suspicions of me, George?"

"Yes," answered George, deeply, and hoarsely—"Yes, I have had suspicions of you;—horrid, hellish suspicions!"

"Ah, you need not say it so vehemently; —Yes, I have been told as much;—people have hinted all that to me; yes; a day or

two ago, they might have convinced you I had something to do with the abduction of Miss Anna Kennedy."

"And it is not you who have forced her away?" asked George.

"How could I, my boy? Listen to me—I will be perfectly candid with you. Anna has certainly been borrowed, a few evenings since, from the house of her nominal guardian. But, if *I* had taken her away, why should I have coaxed you out of your nice little crib, merely that we should meet here, face to face, and that I should be ready to answer any of your questions about her?"

"I don't see a good reason why you should have done so," replied George; "but before we go any further, answer me one other little question—Father and son, as we sit here together,—answer me one other little question!—will you, will you?"

"Pooh—nonsense,—to be sure I will;—what is it?"

"You knew nothing *whatever* of the vio-

lence committed on Anny Kennedy, before it occurred?"

The laugh which now escaped George Blundell's companion was so loud, so long, and yet so seemingly innocent, that it at once startled and confounded—if it did not convince—his methodical catechist.

"Swear to it by Heaven!" cried George.

"I swear to it by Heaven!" answered his agreeable associate.

"And swear to it by Hell!"—

"Oh—that is still more easy; so I swear to it by Hell; as also by the pleasant places that surround that port; banks, rivers, shoals, sands, caves, and so forth; and all the other little things that make an ugly harbour seem agreeable to the eye."

"But you have now sworn solemnly?" re-urged George Blundell.

"I have, very solemnly. Do you wish me to swear by anything else? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I must be contented, I suppose, with your declaration.—Well; you have set

me free; and I thank you. And you have done me that service, too, under a promise of satisfying me upon all the points connected with Anny, which I want to have cleared up. First, then,—With whom am I to reckon for the outrage committed upon her?—Can you point your finger distinctly to the man."

"I can, very easily."

"Name him, then!" cried George Blundell, starting up, fiercely.

"A Mr. Connor Kennedy."

"Ha!—My surmises were not unfounded!"—

"And,—now,—little Anny's husband," continued the strange Man, smiling quietly.

"The villain!—the deep, deep, hypocritical villain!"

"Ah! yes, indeed; you may well call him that."

"So!"—continued George, walking like a mad man about the room; "I read aright, then, the meaning of her letter to me, the

other day; this *was—this is* the impassable barrier, so suddenly placed between us!"

"Her letter to you the other day?—You have received one from her, have you, since you were betrayed to prison by that man?"

"I have—and here it is," answered George, snatching it from his pocket.

"May I read it?"

George handed it to him. He perused it attentively.

"Why, aye; this certainly was enough to make you come to the true conclusion. Aye, aye; 'he who *was* her guardian;' any one may complete the sentence by adding, "And who is my husband.""

"Sir," pursued George, "before I take a step—and a serious one, give me the fullest proof that Kennedy and Anny are, at present, man and wife."

"Suppose I could not adduce stronger proof than this very letter, which you have yourself just handed to me, were it not sufficient?—Proof positive, however, I can

and will give you; more of that anon.—First, let us see if we understand each other as to the character and nature of the man you are called upon to reckon with.—You have heard, I presume, that, though now rich, he once was poor—abjectly poor—that the riches he now possesses are the rightful property of the very person who rescued him from his low estate; and that with the most unutterable ingratitude, and with the most devilish duplicity, he disinherited, in fact, his early benefactor, who loved him?"

George Blundell nodded assent.

"Well; as we pass along, we may reason a little upon this Mr. Connor Kennedy. Have you any good grounds for being sure that, at abont forty, he is not the same kind of man he was at about twenty? That he is now incapable of deceiving *you*, in something of the same way, though not half so foully as he once deceived the patron and cherisher of his youth?"

"No—I have no such grounds."

"What has been your own opinion of him, during your acquaintance with him?—Favourable or unfavourable?"

"Unfavourable; even in the teeth of his ward's assurances, I always disliked his manners, his language, and his appearance; and suspected his principles."

"And you might have made worse guesses than those. Very good. Let us go on, coolly.—You waited on Connor Kennedy the other day—or you met him in his house, I believe, though you had not wished to see him; and then you pleaded hard for an interview with Anny. How did he act towards you on that occasion?"

"I remember it well; with cunning and want of candor;—first, he would have evaded my question altogether, then he left the room, promising to use his influence with her to come down to me;—and at last I got a message importing that she would not come down to me, in consequence of

his prohibition; oh! I do remember it."

"Good again. After that, however, you did see her, and became reconciled with her; almost immediately, her abduction followed; and then, to put you out of the way, a trumpery charge of being concerned in that abduction was made against you;—and upon it—mainly supported by one of his own warrants, mark you—you were sent to the common gaol, from which I have just released you. Couple all these facts with Anny's letter to you, and do you longer require proofs of the present real state of the case? Proof, in fact, of my assertion that Connor Kennedy is now the husband of the woman who had sworn to wed no man but yourself?"

"No!" cried George Blundell, "it is as clear as the day-light."

"Well; still a little step farther. You are referred, I see, by this letter, to an explanation with your old friend, Mr. Kennedy; have you demanded it?"

"I have! I have!" replied George, his impatience and fury every moment increasing.

"And was it quite a satisfactory explanation?"

"Hell and earth! do not mock at me! The villain has returned no answer of any kind!"

"There, again. But observe the innocence of the world's ways, shewn by the artless young creature who wrote you this letter. His dupe and his victim, by means and wiles which, as yet, we do not even guess at, she is still simple-hearted enough to think that the man who has deceived you both, and, by subornation of perjury, cast you into a dungeon, whence he could dream of your departure only by the road to the gallows—that *he*—that such a man—would stand before your face, and give you a fair and full account of the machinery by which he robbed you of your young and beautiful, and accomplished, and pure-minded Anny."

George Blundell was now walking slowly up and down the apartment, his brows dragging down over his burning eyes, his hands clenched, and his teeth sunk into his bleeding lip.

"I knew that man, of old—that Connor Kennedy," pursued his companion, speaking in a low, deliberate manner.

George Blundell suddenly stopped, and looked intently at him.

"Yes, George, my son; I knew him well, more than twenty years ago. Attend to me, boy. You are now about to hear more of me than you have yet become acquainted with; and my story may help to enlighten you still more upon the steps you ought to take in your present great and unmerited misfortunes. Attend to me.

"I have already told you that I left my native country in my youth; that I was shipwrecked, and cast naked, friendless, and pennyless, on a far-off coast; and that afterwards I becamo a merchant, and real-

ized wealth by many years of profitable traffic. In this latter statement, however, I did not rightly instruct you, and for the following reasons. At the first meeting between us, which you are capable of remembering, I found you a brave, bold boy, and I did not wish, by giving you a real account of my path to fortune, to arouse, perhaps, your boyish wish to follow in my steps. Although most unfortunate and most injured, and the world would add, no strict honourer of some of its laws, I would not hold out my life as an example to you. No; I wished you to remain in your native land, boy, honoured, respected, and happy. You are already aware that my first visit to Ireland, after my shipwreck, was for the purpose of seeking you out, and providing for the nurture of your infancy and your childhood; and—"

"Stop father—" said George Blundell; "is your real name that which you at present asume, and have given to me?"

"You anticipate me but by a little," answered the strange Man of the Inch; "I had nearly come to that very point; I will therefore answer you distinctly. My name is Henry Stokesbury, not Philip Blundell."

"Impossible! he perished at sea! so at least those said who have ever mentioned that unhappy man to me."

"It is not impossible, George. It is true. I am the man. And need I therefore repeat to you that, twenty years ago, I knew your Connor Kennedy, well?"

"No, indeed," answered George; "although but vaguely acquainted with his story and your's, it has ever been my impression that you met with very unworthy treatment at his hands."

"Unworthy treatment!" scoffed the narrator, with one of his often terrible laughs. "You use charitable language, George, towards the destroyer of your father. And you are but vaguely acquainted, you say

with our joint story? Well—a few words will soon supply that deficiency."

As he proceeded in his narration, Henry Stokesbury, whenever the recollection of his own early injuries wrought upon his fiery nature, seemed almost hurried into personal contact with the individual, and the circumstances to which he chiefly alluded; his tone and actions would become fearfully impetuous; his eyes would flash, his lips would foam. During other parts of his recital his manner and himself seemed to change, on the contrary, into something of the freshness of youthful feeling; as if, indeed, feeling could still have been fresh within him. And again, when it was his object to work a purpose upon his listener, he would become cool and effective; giving expression to that mingled craft and passion which, perhaps, his life's course had interwoven in his character.

"George," he said, "I can commiserate your feelings and sufferings; for even as

you feel, and suffer, I have felt and suffered; and even as you have been wronged, cajoled, and outraged, so have I been; nay, and in almost the same circumstances, and by the same man. You love your Anny; at your age, I loved a creature at least her equal; oh—Mary was indeed formed to soften the trubulent spirit of man, as does a night in June, when the air is still, and even its little breezes are nestling in the closed cup of the blossom? Oh yes—yes—I loved you, Mary, —and, gnarled as I am, the passion is in my pith to this day. And, George, I loved my mother—my good mother, too! and with a full and fond affection. But, in my boyhood I lost her. A few months after her death, I found, by chance, a relation of hers, about my own age, in the most wretched state of poverty. He was friendless, houseless, naked, starving—a foot-ball, to be kicked by others in their sport. For my dead mother's sake, I protected the outcast, I snatched him to my bosom, and held firm

tight there. I brought him to my father's house, and warmed and fondled him at his hearth. He ate with me at the same board; his raiment was as mine own; I relished no sport, no pastime, which he did not share. I shared every thing with him—aye, even my heart; for even *him* I loved, thinking that I caught flittings of my mother's nature, and of her likeness, and of her character, in the milky blandness of his smiles; yea, in all he looked, or said, or did."

Stokesbury went on to describe, as others, even including himself, have described it, the double treachery of which he felt Connor Kennedy had been guilty. We compress his story; but for the necessary purpose of fully displaying his character, we must venture, even at the risk of being accused of tautology, to report his own expositions upon certain points and circumstances.

Taking him up, therefore, at his contin-

uation, of the account of his dire quarrel with his father, he speaks as follows:

"My father snatched a deadly weapon, my cousin's arms were flung around me—'For the love of peace, and for God's love,' he whimpered into my ears, while tears streamed down his cheeks—aye, the very tears ran from his crocodile eyes, as he softly cajoled me, in my mother's voice—and his wet cheek was laid to mine, and its watery chillness did, indeed, cool my boiling blood. 'For the love of blessed peace, and for God's dear love,' he whimpered—and mark you, his arms still twined round me—'Do not, oh, do not, stand up before your father's wrath! I will be your friend with him—the friend that, as you, and heaven know, I ought to be to you on every occasion!' aye, so he *said*, 'I will appease,' quoth he, 'your father's terrible passion—I will be the peace-maker between ye; I will reconcile the maniac parent with the hasty son; oh, turn away a moment

from his door, and nothing will I leave undone to lead you back to it in peace! my heart's last drop, I will shed, if necessary to accomplish this! and" he continued, again appealing to heaven, 'the heavens can judge that life itself were but a trifling sacrifice for him who has done every thing for me.'

"So—I abided by the counsel of this cousin of mine. Driveller that I was! his influence over me had always been powerful; because, as I have said, my mother's features, my mother's voice, and my mother's tenderness of nature, seemed to be his; and the slightest word from that mother, during her suffering existence, and delivered in her plaintive accents, used ever to come upon my boyish stubborncss, like gentle, taming music. So, so—my good cousin, led me to the threshold of my father's door; saw me depart from it; and returned into my father's house, shutting its door on himself. Afterwards, we often conferred together in the

neighbourhood; for still, and still, he kept up a shew of endearing affection. And his efforts to persuade my father into a forgiving mood, were not, he said, as speedily successful as he had reckoned on, and he therefore advised a temporary absence from my native place, for the purpose of keeping from my father's ears gossipping stories to my prejudice. Again, I complied with his counsel, receiving from his hands liberal means, I know not how acquired for my journey. Yes; I abandoned not only the paternal roof, but home itself; and I parted in rage against my father, because, as my cousin told me, forsooth, he would not be reconciled to his only son—his only child.

"Whither I went, or who became my associates in my obscure exile, it is unnecessary to say. Twelve months elapsed; I heard, by chance, of my father's death, and I hurried home to possess my own inheritance, and to snatch my betrothed bride to my bosom. But before I had quite reached

my journey's end, what were the tidings I learned, think you?"

We again pass over Henry Stokesbury's recapitulation of the acts of treachery with which he and, indeed, the world at large, charged Connor Kennedy.

"I was not formed by nature to bear a wrong tamely;" he continued; "I was not made of the sodden stuff that will yield to trampling, assuming whatever shape the trampler chooses to impress upon it. No! my brain took fire; it burned for vengeance! The law, as they call it, could, or would, yield me none; not even technical redress. The parchments, which had ratified the robbery of my birth-right were, of course, duly signed, and sealed, and delivered, as the phrase goes: aye, and properly witnessed, and carefully registered.—And, my Mary, she was in the villain's arms!"

George Blundell started up, sympathysing with the now fearful energy of the strange Man.

"Yes, yes! I see you can understand me. And as you feel now for the irretrievable loss of your Anny, so felt I then for that of my Mary. Yes! a craven, with liquid ice circulating through his heart, might have whined, and wept, and told his story to the dull ears of the law, or of the world, craving a little pity of the listeners, and experienced, in return, the cold superciliousness bestowed by all upon the wretch and the outcast. But that I did not stoop to:—that I did not attempt to do. This I *did*,—I went to my father's house, to my own house, I should say; I burst in my own doors;—I stood upon mine own hearth; and I confronted the reptile,—the rat, who had mined his way thither. Oh! by the eternal heavens! it was a sight worth the seeing! That detected knave quailing before me! But not long did I allow him to quail;—I struck him to my foot!—I trod upon his carcass!—and I left him, as I thought, a venomous thing, with the life crushed out of him!

"But even in this he deceived me; aye, once again the cousin cozened me. He recovered his vile breath;—he lived on his vile life:—yea, and he has lived it on, to play with you the same game that he so adroitly practised upon me.

"Well, I was seized on the spot, while he yet enacted the part of the dead knave at my feet. I was dragged to a dungeon. I was put to the bar of justice;—no, not to the bar of justice; for justice would never have stood up for the despoiler, and wreaked her vengeance on the outraged. No! but I was placed at that bar where wily villainy is legalized in set terms. I cared little for my fate. I had been made a desperate man. My hopes of earthly happiness, my means of earthly subsistence, my every thing, had been torn from me; and at that bar there was but one chance I wished for. I longed, Oh! how I longed, to see my gentle cousin come forward to give his testimony against me! Nay, I slept not, night after night, before my trial,

for pondering over and arranging the exposure which I should make of this monster before the world's face! But, on this occasion, he acted towards me as he did towards yourself, the other day, before the magistrates. With his own lips he spoke indeed, no word against either of us; from me he kept quite aloof; but his measures for the destruction of us both were, nevertheless, well taken, and well timed.—I have more to say to you on this subject.

"But, to continue my own frightful story. I cared not how they judged me. I hired no lawyer, no advocate. I attempted no defence of any kind. I was condemned. I was pronounced a criminal, for having entered my own rightful dwelling, and for having punished under its roof the villain who had despoiled me of it, and, with it, my affianced wife!. Aye, I was condemned —I was sentenced. Aye, by heaven's light, I was banished from my native country; lopped off, as a canker that infected it! As a felon, they forced me from its shores:—

aye, as a *branded* felon! Do ye hear me, George Stokesbury? As a *branded* felon, I say. Look! look! let your own eyes bear witness to the truth of my assertion! look at it well. The mark of infamy! Look at it, boy: burned into your father's flesh! look! look!"

Flakes of foam were on his lips; his maniac eyes rolled fearfully; and his voice was attenuated to a scream, as he tore away his vesture, bared his right arm, and exhibited to the almost equally agitated George, the foul escutcheon of his degradation.

There was a long pause, during which Henry Stokesbury walked impetuously about the room. At length he stopped; and, of a sudden, his passion seemed to have flown. He came close to George Blundell; he peered under the young man's darkened brow, and said,—

"You will remember that I have exposed this arm to you, for I will challenge your recollection of the fact. Let me also

tell you, that when the red-hot, villain iron hissed into my blood, communicating its hellish ardour to my whole vital current, I felt,—I *felt*,—that, although not present, it was Connor Kennedy's own hand which ruthlessly stamped on my body the ineffacible record of a living, walking disgrace!—You attend?"

"No word that you have said is lost upon me," answered George Blundell.

They were again silent; Stokesbury resumed, coolly:

"You have heard my story. Well, from my twenty years' experience of Connor Kennedy, I have been able to trace him in all his slimy wiles against yourself; apply a scale to *your* chapter of wrongs, and to mine own, and do they not tally? And are you, therefore, surprised that it should have been in my power to render you such a service?"

"No," replied George; "and you *can* explain to me the motives for Mr. Kennenedy's whole course of conduct towards me?"

"Listen, and decide if I cannot: and, as I go on, observe, I charge you again, how close a parallel runs between his treatment of you, at present, and his treatment of me, long ago."

"Anny Kennedy was bequeathed, by a dying father, to the care of her infamous betrayer. The will which gave Connor Kennedy this right over her, also endowed Anny with a large fortune. She grew up a lovely girl. From the first bloom of her young charms, her practised guardian coveted her person; her wealth he had always thirsted after. So, he sought to writhe himself into her favour; and his drivelling vanity, misinterpreting the common-place attentions she bestowed upon him, in gratitude for his care of her childhood, had nearly persuaded him of success, until his eyes were opened by the artless girl's admission of a preference for yourself. Then he endeavoured to wean her from you; but your Anny was faithful to you, George; and, by heaven, I can pity

you the loss, at last, of that sweet girl's affection!"

"I ask not your pity, sir; pity, even from you, I spurn. 'Twould be but a poor satisfaction for all I have endured. Go on, sir, I pray you."

His tempter, having eyed him with a sneer of fiendish triumph, continued:

"When Connor Kennedy found that she loved you, dearly and unalterably, for the good character you bore, among other things, —then began his plottings against you: your stolen visits to me he soon discovered. From my retired mode of life, and my necessarily equivocal position and habits,—for I would not have been recognized as the felon Harry Stokesbury,—idle rumour had circulated many things to my prejudice. Kennedy also became aware of this fact, and turned it to his own account. By his secret agents, he added to the disreputable insinuations against me, and, by degrees, involved your name with mine, in the odium attendant on

such lying stories. Nay, more. He actually caused outrages to be committed, and then had them charged on us both. Through the agency of a menial, a vile character whom he loads with bribes to ensure his services, he hired bravos, and, by their hands, in the first instance, and, mark you, while they personated you and me, the old man's daughter by the river-side, was forced off.

"When you were charged as my accomplice in this act, I could not stand forward as your vindicator, because that must have led to my identification as Henry Stokesbury; but I silenced the silly proceeding in the manner I have already stated to you. Do you begin to comprehend the occurrences of the last few weeks?"

"I attend to every thing you say."

"Well, having failed on this occasion, a deeper plot was laid against your only earthly hopes of happiness; indeed, against your life.

"In the dead of the night, Anny Kennedy herself was torn from her home. Tell me, how was entrance gained into Kennedy's house? how could it have been, but by his connivance? And observe, again. For four hours after her abduction, no notice was taken of the fact by him or by his household, for four long hours. And at the end of that lapse of time, Connor Kennedy's own faithful servant was discovered, forsooth, tied to his bed-post, and gagged, and so forth; and when they made him free to use his tongue again, this fellow it was who accused you of having been a party in the outrage committed on Anny Kennedy: nay, farther, he swore before the sage magistrates, that you had even assisted to tie him up and gag him, and otherwise maltreat him, did he not?"

"I remember," assented George.

"Yes, and upon that ruffian's testimony, you were sent to prison; and upon that ruffian's testimony, you were to be tried and

convicted, as a felon, had not I interfered to protect you; and, at least, sent, as I had been, from your native country, disgraced and—branded!"

"How did the hired abductors of Anny Kennedy dispose of her?" enquired George.

"They took her to a remote place, provided for the occasion, by her guardian;—guardian indeed! Ha! ha! and there she was informed, and she believed the information, that you were the perpetrator of the violence committed upon her; aye, and there, by more atrocious measures than even these, your poor Anny was compelled to become the wife of Connor Kennedy.,'

"How compelled?—what other and more atrocious measures do you speak of?"

"I will answer you in due course. Now for a proof I have promised you of the truth of some of my statements."

Stokesbury struck his heel violently twice, or thrice, against the floor: a deliberate tread was heard coming up stairs; and

Donnelly, Connor Kennedy's servant, entered the room.

"Do you know this man, George?"

"I do; he is the same you have just spoken of;—the same who swore falsely against me."

"Yes; he is that man. It was easy for me to surmise, knowing that he had been guilty of perjury, who had set him on, to destroy you; I sought him out, therefore, and found him as willing to betray his employer for a bribe, as he had been to take one from him."

This was said in a low tone to George; Henry Stokesbury went on aloud:—"Sirrah! relate to this young gentleman, as you have already related to me, the plots in which you have been engaged against him."

In a cold and unimpassioned tone and manner, Donnelly complied, verifying Stokesbury's previous accounts to George Blundell, of the wiles, the treachery, and the

baseness of Connor Kennedy; and to every question proposed by the young man, the scoundrel answered quietly, and to the purpose.

"From what motive did you engage in these matters with Mr. Kennedy?" demanded George Blundell.

"Why, then, 'pon my nate conscience, for the motive what people calls a long purse o' money."

"And you have since divulged Mr. Kennedy's secrets?" continued George.

"Yes, faith, an' so I have; an' does your honour want to know the motive, as you call it, over again? Ha! ha!"

"Yes, declare it."

"Glory to my sowl, then, bud it was for the motive of a longer purse of money than the one that went before it."

"You are satisfied, George?" demanded Stokesbury.

"Yes, yes, I am;" muttered the youth.

"Go down stairs, then, and await me

elsewhere," continued the strange Man of the Inch; and Donnelly went away, accordingly, as unconcerned as if he had but performed some every day business.

George Blundell's feelings were sunk too deeply into him to allow of much exterior exhibition of them. He continued silent. Stokesbury observed him keenly, giving him leisure to cogitate as well as he could, for a necessary period of time, upon all that had been presented to his mind. At length, he suddenly renewed, close to him, the former question.

"You say you are satisfied?"

George started from his black reverie, and looked into the eyes of his interrogator.

"You spoke to me, sir?"

"*Are* you satisfied?" again asked Stokesbury.

"Satisfied, sir?—let me see. Perhaps I do not quite understand the drift of your question?"

"I have told you before, George, that I had returned to this native land of mine, which, in my boyish days, cast me from its bosom, as it might have done one of its weeds upon the waters, only for the purpose of promoting and fixing your happiness. I have told you, and you know I can pro e it, that, through me, great riches awaited you, like flowers strewn under your foot, along your path of life; and, dear boy, had your Anny but been left to you, all my hopes, and, perhaps, more than all my hopes, in your regard, might have been realized."

The lad groaned, and, suddenly turning, said,—

"Now I recollect something. You told me a while ago that you would inform me by what means, and you called them atrocious when you alluded to them,—Anny has been compelled to become that man's wife?"

"Aye, and so I did; and that is rather

an important point. Let me explain it to you in a whisper."

He put his lips to George's ear, and slowly hissed into it a few words.

The youth started up ferociously."

"Beware, sir! Father, as you say you are to me, beware how you say *that!* You know not to what you urge me!

"I state but the fact, boy. In that lonely and savage place, she could feel no hope of escape, and of re-establishment in the world, after his measures towards her, but by consenting to become his wife. But how do you think he made this really appear to the eyes of uninterested persons? Are you listening to me?"

"I am; go on."

"Why, Mr. Connor Kennedy has done no more, nor less, than impress upon the minds of the good christians of his and our neighbourhood, that you, you, yourself, have been the causes of that certain blight on Anny's character; and that he, through pure chris-

tian charity, has, by becoming her husband, sacrificed himself to bind up in a kind of legal, technical way, her bruised reputation. And now, let me ask you, do these little facts help still further to explain Anny Kennedy's letter to you in your dungeon?"

"All is explained," answered George, in a deep, shivering, inward voice; "Yes—the explanation is full; and, oh! it has changed my blood into hot venom, and my heart into the hardest stone!—merciless—merciless, it has made me!—The wrongs against my father and against myself were, to be sure, sufficient to inspire me with a deadly purpose;—yet I tried to push the thought from me, while it prompted merely an act of vengeance. But now do I cease to be an avenger!"—he continued, starting up—"now am I called upon, as if by the voice of Heaven itself, to become the minister of justice!"

"Before this moment," continued Stokes-

bury, pretending not to have heard the last words, "I kept from you all avowal of a determination to which I had come, even before we had begun to speak—Now, however, I deliberately ask you—does not the double traitor—the treble, the ten-fold traitor, and villain—deserve, at my hands, what earthly law refuses to mete out to him—namely, punishment?"

"Why ask me such useless questions?—Had you but listened to me, I have already answered you."

"Perhaps I might have returned to the better-loved land of my adoption, without deciding upon such a blow, had not the wrongs committed upon my son, roused up, and added new rancour to those perpetuated upon myself;—had not I found that the villain who poisoned the source of my life's stream—not contented with that,—flung new infection into its current!—and shall he a second time escape me?—I ask

you again, does not Connor Kennedy merit punishment?"

"Have some compassion on me! Do not lacerate me so! Connor Kennedy *shall* be punished."

"He shall, by Heaven!—this very night, boy! Within this very hour, perhaps, I will avenge you! you and myself,—upon the closely-coiled, the fully-gorged, and the self-secure reptile! Await me here—all my measures are arranged;—you are already an object of the scrutiny of their laws;—in a very short time so shall I be also;—when I return, be prepared to accompany me at the instant, towards a remote and safe place of refuge."

"Psha, father! Do not touch those pistols on the table!"

"And why not?—They are my doomed instruments of—— punishment on Connor Kennedy."

"No—no! For that purpose—that holy purpose, they are mine!—No other living

creature has a right to them! Let *me* have the weapons!"

"Well; well; I certainly had no intention to depute my office; and if I do, there must be no half-measures, I thank you;—as I have sworn to act, you—my self-elected agent—and my son—must act."

"Have no doubt, or fear of me!"

"Nay—I will not relinquish my sacred right, unless you swear—that he dies!—Aye—and unless you swear it upon this blessed book, in which we all believe;"—and he took from his bosom the volume of which he spoke, and handed it, impressively, to George.

"And I swear!"—responded the wretched youth, hastily catching it up, and pressing it to his fevered lips.

"Still attend to me for a moment, then. With the ruffian whom you have just seen here, I had arranged my manner of admission into Connor Kennedy's house; and since you will represent me, I must explain it to

you:—the fellow knows not, indeed, my intention in visiting his master's premises; but no matter about that; listen to me, I say, and observe me well—three knocks at the hall-door; and thus—thus—and thus—" and the speaker, with the back knuckles of his hand, accompanied each "thus," with a stroke upon the hollow wainstcoating of the room, which produced a sound that curdled, while it still maddened, the young man's blood.

"Yes! yes! and now the pistols—give me both."

"One will be sufficient! I have prepared them with my own hands, and can assure you, therefore, that either one or the other may be depended upon."

"I require both, I say!—Aye—now I am properly armed;—fare you well;—you are the father of a wretched, wretched son—the blighted stem of a blighted scion! But let me take your hand—Fare you well—you shall be revenged—Yes!—along with *her*, and with me, you shall be revenged!"

The boy desperately grasped the hand which was bluffly extended to him;—his hot red eye shed no tear over the separation which he doomed should be final; — and then, hiding the pistols in a hurried manner, he rushed bare-headed and panting, into the street.

And Harry Stokesbury, while returning his parting salutation, as he looked intently and studiously into the expression of that eye, became satisfied that he had wrought upon the lad sufficiently to ensure the dreadful consummation after which he had long thirsted and ravened.

CHAPTER VI.

The same evening, the Mayor of Wind-gap, with Shawn Leeach, and Gregory Roche, were seated together in regular council.

His worship sat in the middle of his usual council-hall—namely, the earthen - floored, but tidily arranged kitchen, of his thatched house, in his municipal wicker chair. The three had for some time been very serious, and still were so; exhibiting, in fact, the faces of gravity, and the decorous manners particularly characteristic of them, when on-

gaged upon matters of great public importance.

Their conversation is taken up, at the moment most convenient for our purpose, and for the reader's leisure.

"You're very ould, Shawn Leeach; the winther's snow is heavy on your head; and yet your head is fast on your neck for all that, Shawn; don't I spake a thruth?" demanded the Mayor, "very wisely."

"Mayor of Wind-gap, you do. Five-score-and-five-years, I have been on this earth—and that is a long age, praise to my Maker; and ould age brings the snowy head—spring comes to the fields, and to the threes, and the flowers of the fields, afther the winther; but there's no spring for the ould man; none in this world, at laste; if he hopes for that, his hope must be fixed in heaven. Yes—Mayor of Wind-gap, I am very ould, as you say, but my ould head is still on my shouldhers."

"Well, Shawn; as thrue as *that* is thrue,

and I repeat it over again, to ye both—Harry Stokesbury that was, and the sthrange Man now living at the Inch house, makes only one man between them."

"The death of a happy christhin be my lot, Mayor of Wind-gap, but that is news to make people wondher," observed Shawn Leeach.

"Och! well did I know him, when he was in his youth," remarked Gregory Roche—"but though my eyes—I give glory for the same—are as good to see with, now, as the day I got them, never would they find out the ruddy-cheeked and the handsome Harry Stokesbury, in that dark, wicked-looking man, that stood in the light of the bonfire last St. John's eve."

"And for all that, Gregory," resumed Maurteen Maher, "and you may take my word for it, I say to you over again—the man that you saw standin' in the light of the fire, that night, was the same Harry Stokesbury you knew in his young days."

"It is seldom I knew you to be far asthray, Mayor of Wind-gap, an' so its asy for me to give you my b'lief in what you say, at present. It was not for having a stupid head the neighbours made you Mayor over them; only, I'm thinkin', ye had some help, besides your own eyes, in making out a likeness between Harry Stokesbury, and the sthrange Man of the Inch."

"And you, yourself, spakes now like a man that had his wits to the good, Gregory Roche," replied the Mayor. "Yes! by my own honest thruth, it would be a keen eye would know the young sapling of former days, out of the present ould oak of the Inch;—and so I *had* help, along with my own eyes, Gregory;—and I am goin' to tell you all about it—you and Shawn Leeach together; and mind ye, both, now ye are sittin' here, at the one side and the other o' me, that we may all hould a thrue council; and ye may know all that I know; and

that I may have your advice on the head of the whole of it; because we'll have to put our shouldhers to the business, in regular coorse."

"We'll each do our endavour, plaze the Lord!" said Shawn Leeach, solemnly.

"And ye know, moreover, that 'tis our ould way that what we spake to each other, when we sit in council, must not go from mouth to ear; for if t'was a thing that we shared our knowledge among all the world, mostha! there wouldn't be half money's worth in it; when apples are bending the boughs in every orchard, sure they are not bought up half as greedy as when there is only two for a half-penny; and more be token, I wouldn't talk to men, wid an ould woman's gaddin' tongue; and ould women, we all know, must get nothing at all to tell, if you'd have the hearth swept."

"What you're sayin' shews the sense God gave ye," flattered Shawn Leeach.

"Mayor of Wind-gap," quoth Gregory

Roche, more pithily, "a silent tongue doesn't shame the owner; and sure, if every one was as wise as ourselves, there would be a mayor in every house on Wind-gap hill; and then we might go wid our judgments out o' the place; and lave nothin' behind us but constructions, and law,—instead of bein' good neighbours to each other, undher God—and us."

"'Tis plain," resumed Maurteen, "that ye are both the sort I took you for, when I made ye my council: and so, I'll be open-hearted wid ye. Ye want to learn how I found out that the sthrange Man of the Inch was Harry Stokesbury. Well. Have ye the memory of a poor *cölleen*, a sisther o' mine, that lived among us, and was merry among us, twenty years ago?"

"Its right well I bring her to my mind—poor Kate Maher!" answered Shawn Leeach.

"And 'tis, have *I* the memory of her, you want to know, Mayor of Wind-gap?"

asked Gregory Roche; "achone! and its sure that I have. Kate Maher was worthy for a prence to look upon: tall an' comely, she was, in her shapes; an' her cheek plump, an' smooth, an' red, like the bloom on the apple; an' her eyes was the blue sky of a May mornin'; and her hair was the shinin' goold; *arrah*, yes; there wasn't your fellow, Kate Maher, on the hill o' Wind-gap."

"It's often, before now, her own ears heard your flatthering speeches of her, Gregory Roche; and well would it have been for her, twenty years ago, if she gave heed to them, only half as often as she heard them. Well. The neighbours never knew what happened to Kate Maher, or why she went away from us; and in thruth, ye are both going to hear her story, for the first time that it ever came out of my lips.

"Young Harry Stokesbury took our poor Kate's heart; and, to my sore sorrow, she wasn't honester for knowin' him; and when

he was sent across the says, she went into the same ship with Harry Stokesbury, in a sailor boy's dhress, all for the love of him; yes, Mayor's council; she left kith and kin, hearth-stone, and home counthry, for his sinful sake."

"Well, neighbours; the ship was smashed into little bits—just as a body would break a nut-shell—upon the rocky shores of a sthrange counthry, a great way off from Wind-gap. And Harry Stokesbury was the only mankind that lived out of the wrack; all the rest of the men that were in the ship—and a fine, great, big, ship it was—sunk to the bottom o' the say, and its wathers roared over them. And my poor Kate was the only woman-kind saved at the same time; and it was Harry Stokesbury that saved her; and many others, may be, man and woman, he might have thried to save—for as ye all know, he was the best swimmer we ever seen, on breast or back, in the river that 'runs undher our

feet; stay out in it, he used to do, like one of its own fishes—only that he just kept his chin above the wather—for hours together; and then dart back to the bank where he left his clothes, and jump up on it, as if he had been only takin' a little walk in my little garden, where I keep the osiers growing, for my basket thrade, and sometimes for my chair thrade.

"And so, he only saved but the one; and that one was the poor creature that left her counthry for him; my poor, misfortunate, and only sisther, Kate Maher. And long did he fight wid the terrible waves o' the angry say, and he would not go from death, without her; until at last his feet touched the shores o' the sthrange counthry, and she, senseless, in his arums.

"From that time to the present time, the most befitting thing for me to say is that poor Kate Maher never left the man that wouldn't care about his own life, until he had saved hers; though it grieves me sore

to tell ye that many, and many, a time, since that day, she got good cause to quit him.

"Avoch, neighbours! Ye have heard everybody talkin' of an unfortunate ould woman, that keeps house for him at the Inch; and sore it goes against my heart to say that that woman—withered before her time— though, as ye both know, not yet as ould as the people call her—is my poor sisther. And so, now ye can give a guess how I got my knowledge of who the Sthrange Man is, and, more be token, of some of his doin's since he came to live near us, for the second time in his life."

"'Tis mighty wondherful to harken to the words o' your mouth; mighty wondherful, in good thruth, Maurteen Maher," said old Shawn Leeach, sitting more upright, and looking more vivacious, than for many years had been his expression. Tears were in his eyes, too.

"Achone! its often I sarched out tidin's

o' my poor Kate, afore this blessed hour," groaned Gregory Roche;—bud you held the silent tongue, Mayor o' Wind-gap;—and its heart-sorry for her I am this day;—Och!—if she had only lived among us 'till the prasant time, in the wholesome air that comes up here from the river, she would have no wrinkle in her face—for my poor Kate Maher is not yet an ould woman."

"No, Gregory, as I tould you afore;—but a sthrange coorse o' life, and a life of sin and hardship, and the airly thoughts of her youth—for she was bred up to love and sarve God—stalin' like the blight of the unwholesome wind upon her—made Kate Maher what she is, before her time;—yes;—made her comb a gray head, afore another girl of her years would have a white hair in it, to tell of the comin' winther;—so that her cheek was shrivelled up by the woe of her sperit;—Och! neighbours, neighbours, she has tould me herself not to wondher at the wrinkles of her face; for that the con-

stant cryin' from her eyes would wear channels into the hardest marble;"—the voice of the stoical Mayor of Wind-gap trembled;—nor were his council uninfected by his feelings.

"The Lord forgive her, and bring her to a thrue sinse of her sins," said old Shawn Leeach.

"The Lord pity her, and be her comfort," ejaculated the more sympathizing Gregory Roche.

"Neighbours, I am afther telling ye what I would not tell, and what I never will tell to another livin' crathure. Our poor Kate must now go to her grave without the world's knowledge that she is alive here among us. All I can now thry to do for my sisther, is to take her quietly away from the man that has made her what she is;—that's one o' the things I want your help in. And so listen—We must do our endayvours to get her free with Harry Stokesbury's own good will;—for if he had a notion that she

tould the secrets of her life, her death-doom was given. And I intend, neighbours, to get something for her to live on, while she is on this earth, repenting of her sins, and prayin' for mercy;—and I have the plan in my mind how to do this, aye, and another thing at the same time, if the Lord gives us his help."

"It will be a work of charity, and He will assist us," said Shawn Leeach.

"In Him we put our thrust.—Well, neighbours, I have more to tell ye.

"The name of the counthry isn't in my mind where Harry Stokesbury brought Kate Maher out of the say;—but there is people far away from us that never earn an honest mouthful of food, from the beginning of the year to the year's ending.—And they have ships;—and they sail out in them upon the say;—and they meet other ships full of marchendizes of all sorts and loaded with chests of money;—and they fight with those ships;—and they conquer them;—and they

shed the blood of the christians they find in them;—and they make their own of all the riches;—and there is nothing terrible that these robbers of the say don't do. And now, mind me well. It was among these wicked people that Harry Stokesbury landed out of the wrack with Kate Maher.—And Harry soon began to love and like their ways;—and as he was a bould and a brave man, he soon made himself captain of a robbin' ship. And then poor Kate was soon overlooked by him;—he took up with fine ladies;—and she was only his sarvant; but still she worked with a good heart for the man she loved dearly, and that saved her, at the risk of his own life, from a winding sheet o' the salt say-wather—neighbours, she did."

"The Lord look down upon us, and purtect us!" prayed Gregory Roche in consternation.

"Ye have the knowledge, Mayor's council, of what Harry Stokesbury did, that

brought banishment upon him; but there is more to be said on that score;—and only three people in the world can tell ye what the more is;—and I am one of the three.

"A little while before Connor Kennedy lost his wife, she brought a male-child into the world;—and she was not well of her lying-in, when her husband was half-killed at her bed-side—and 'twas that sent herself to her arly grave—Connor Kennedy and she did not wish that any one should be the wiser of her marriage;—they were afraid of Harry Stokesbury;—and they thought to hide it, in hopes of getting his good will, before any one could tell him of it:—and for that rason they sent away the child as soon as it saw the light. And that child was forced off from its nurse, and no one can tell of the fate of the crature, to this day, barrin' the three people I spoke to ye of before;—but, neighbours, the child was sazed on by Harry Stokesbury;—and it is a man at the present time, alive; and more

betoken, a comely gorsoon to look upon;—an' the two o' ye that I'm talkin' to have often seen him, face to face, an' are mightily plazed wid his looks;—and more than once, I heard Gregory Roche say,"—Here Gregory started, and looked confounded—"that he was as brave a boy as ever he liked to see, comin' up from the town below, to Wind-gap Hill;—Gregory Roche, don't I spake the thruth to ye?—answer me like a christhin."

"The Heavens be my bed," answered Gregory Roche, making the sign of the Cross on his forehead—"if I can call to mind who or what you mane at all, Mayor of Wind-gap."

"I am five-score years, and some more years on the back of them, living on Wind-gap Hill, where strange people goes to and fro and sthrange things are hard of; but the likes o' this never came across me before," said Shawn Leeach.

"You might thravel a long summer's day, Shawn, and you would not find one to

know what the Mayhor knows," adulated Gregory Roche.

"And I know more, still, neighbours;—I know Connor Kennedy's boy—aye—I know him, to spake to him;—and I know where he is while we are discoursen' about him;"—and the Mayor paused, as if waiting for a new flattering comment; but his two old counsellors were too intent with their ears to use their tongues;—he was, therefore, obliged to go on.

"Shawn Leeach, and Gregory Roche—as sure as ye are both sittin' here, this is the thruth;—Connor Kennedy's son goes by the name of George Blundell."

"Why, the Lord be good to us!—And isn't id thrue, at the same time, then, that the father has the son in gaol, and that he'll hang him on the gallows-hill, over there?"—and Gregory pointed to a sudden conical elevation of ground on the opposite side of the river, then the honored place of execution.—"An' if Connor Kennedy is that

boy's father, didn't the son break into the father's house, and take away his own sis-ther!—For you know, Mayor of Wind-gap, the people say that the young girl livin' with Connor Kennedy is his daughther;—and then, won't the brother have to answer for the sisther's shame?—And won't the father have to answer for the death o' the son?"

"I tould ye, Mayor's council, that the first thing you're to give your advice in is the freein' of unfortunate Kate Maher from Harry Stokesbury, with his own free will;—and now I tell ye that the other thing ye have to do is to give your counsel how we are to keep the father from hangin' of his own son."

"Mayor of Wind-gap," said Shawn Leeach, impressively, "won't you go to Connor Kennedy and tell him his son is livin'; and that the boy in the gaol is that son?—won't you, this moment?"

"And if I did, Shawn, Connor Kennedy

would have only my word for the thruth o' the sayin'; and, on account of all we have to do, that would never be enough. There is only the one man on the face o' the arth can prove—prove it, I mane, beyond all doubt — that George Blundell is Connor Kennedy's son——and that man is Harry Stokesbury."

"And, Mayor o' Wind-gap," demanded Gregory Roche, imploringly, — "Has the brother to stand afore the judgment-sate, to give an account o' the poor young sisther?"

"Gregory Roche, I am goin' to make answer to you, in a way that will put the wondher on you, more than any word ye have yet hard me spake.—The brother had nothing to do with takin' away the sisther; but the father had all to do with takin' away the daughter."

"Ulla-loo!" ejaculated Gregory, "one sayin' o' yours bates the other, out-an'-out; will you make known to me this, then?—

Didn't Connor Kennedy put the boy in gaol for doin' what he never done, but what the wicked father o' the young *calleen* made come to pass with his own hands?"

"Mind me, again, Gregory. The wicked father o' the young *calleen* took her away, of a sartainty; but not Connor Kennedy:—*he* had no more to do with it than poor young George Blundell had."

And, interrupting his council in expressions of a climax of their astonishment, Maurteen Maher added—"and it was Harry Stokesbury forced her away;—and as sure as George Blundell is Connor Kennedy's son, Anny Kennedy is Harry Stokesbury's daughther!"

Here the feelings of the listeners became too deep for any thing but vague mutterings; till at length Shawn Leeach asked—"*Chrbs-sa-Christha* about us!—and did the wicked villain o' the arth know who was in his hands, the night he took Anny Kennedy from her home?"

"No, Shawn; no more than Gregory Roche knew it; and I b'lieve Gregory won't purtend to much knowledge on the matther. But, listen to me, still, neighbours, and thry if I can't give ye some insight.

"From the day and hour that Harry Stokesbury was banished from his counthry, up to this blessed moment, he never forgave Connor Kennedy; and 'tis my thought of him, that he'd turn the world inside-out—aye, sell himself, sowl and body to some one we won't make mention of—to do his cousin an evil; and so, thinkin' like yourself and the rest o' the people, Gregory, that Anny Kennedy was his daughther, wicked Harry ran off with her, to spite the man he thought was her father."

"Oh, *beeha baugha*,* Mayor of Wind-gap!" cried Shawn Leeach, his snowy head shaking to extremity—"and did the misfortunate man bring the disgrace on

* Virgin Mother.

his own child? Achone! did that come to pass so near to Wind-gap hill?"

"No, Shawn Leeach; he learned who she was in time:" answered the Mayor consequentially, and to a nice observer egotistically.

"Then, may the heavens be blest, this night! for if such a thing had happened, wouldn't it be enough to bring down upon the earth the angry fire from Heaven, and to make the innocent suffer with the guilty?"

"Who was the blessed christhen that sthretched out his hand, in time?" demanded Gregory Roche, see-sawing his body in deep sympathy.

"It was myself that was able, undher the Lord's mercy, to do the good deed, Gregory."

"Och! the blessin's light upon you! an' I wouldn't doubt you, Mayor o' Wind-gap."

"Well, neighbours. But there is one

thing that I am asthray upon. By help o' the poor Kate Maher, I was able to dive to the bottom of a great many of Harry Stokesbury's doins'; but 'tis beyand her knowing, and, by coorse, beyand my knowing, what he has in his head, by conthrivin' to make the father, Conner Kennedy, put the son, George Blundell, in gaol. For, ye must know, it was Harry Stokesbury that got Donnelly to swear against the poor young boy; Donnelly—the greatest rapparee unhanged this night; he'd rob the althar for money; and it was threachery that he was put into Connor Kennedy's house."

"And so, Maurteen Maher, we are to give you our counsel upon the point, why the wicked man o' the Inch has got Connor Kennedy to let George Blundell be sent to the common gaol?"

"Yes; and, first, here is my own notion about it. As I tould ye afore, Stokesbury 'ud go to the thrashold o' the bottomless

pit, if not farther, to have one good, heavy blow at Connor Kennedy; and I was thinkin' in my own mind, that to make his cousin's ould age come on before its time, and to send him despairing to the grave, he wants—since he has found out that Anny Kennedy is not Connor's child, and that he cannot for the same rason, wrake his hathred upon her—he wants, I say, to make the father an insthrument in takin' away the son's life; and then he'll come to Kennedy, and say to him—'Look now, at that sthrangled corpse—and look at it well—for 'tis the corpse o' your own boy! And, in this manner, cousin Kennedy, I have a little revenge on you; in this manner I pay you part of what I have owed you these twenty long years, for robbing me of my fortune, of my father's love, and of my bethrothed wife!'"

The Mayor's council shuddered, and prayed that all good christians might be

kept out of the power of a man capable of such unimaginable villany.

"Shawn Leeach, and Gregory Roche, this work of darkness we must gainsay, if heaven vouchsafes to give us the wisdom, and the patience, and the manes to do it."

Solemnly, and with zealous protestations, his Worship's compeers expressed their anxiety to aid and abet him to the utmost of their ability; "And," added Shawn Leeach, "our humble prayers will help you too, morning and evening, Maurteen Maher."

"And I will go on my knees, and pray, too," continued the Mayor; "but," and his manner became impressive and alarming—"still I have a fear that we must fail in our endeavours. And, first, the fear came from my being in the dark, as to Stokesbury's raal intentions in regard o' the young George; and now I have the fear that we are to fail, by rason o' the doom that is on the poor boy. A thought comes heavy and

black into my mind, that death is afore him, and that he must face it. Shawn Leeach, give me the words of your age, upon what I will ask you. When the first son of a marriage comes into the world on a Whit-sunday mornin', afore the day dawns in the sky—isn't there a doom upon that son?"

Daddy Leeach answered, in all the slow sententiousness of oracular exposition, his eyes solemnly fixed on the ground:

"Mayor of Wind-gap, there is a doom, a woeful doom upon the first son of a marriage that is born of a Whit-sunday mornin' afore the day breaks, to give him a welcome. During my stay in this wicked world, the doom came to pass three times, to my own certain knowledge."

"And ochone, ochone! what is the doom, Shawn Leeach?" asked Gregory Roche.

"This is the doom, Gregory. When that son comes to his twenty-first year, he will kill a fellow-creature, or some fellow-

creature's hand will kill him; aye surely, surely; blood he is to shed, or else his own must be shed."

"Then, Shawn Leeach, I tell you that Gerrald Kennedy, for that is the name he got at his christinin', the first son, afther his parent's marriage, was born into the world of a Whit-sunday morning, afore the dawn broke up the clouds o' the night; and, moreover, that his twenty-first year is on his young head."

"The Lord have a care of him, since such is his case!" prayed Daddy Leeach.

"Och, an' amin'," said Gregory; "and, Mayor o' Wind-gap, won't it, oh, won't it be a frightful thing if his own father's hand is to bring down the doom on young George Blundell? Is'nt it in your power to save him? or in the power of us all, or of any one?"

"Gregory Roche, I have the dhread that 'tis out of our power to save him; we want to go to work in a very conthrary business,

and, as yet, we do not see a stim of our way afore us. I tould ye, a while ago, that t'would be of no use for me to go to Connor Kenndey, and tell who George Blundell is; without proofs, and good ones, too, he would laugh at ould Maurteen Maher, and no blame to him. I said to ye, at the same time, that Harry Stokesbury is the only livin' man who can give us the kind of proof we want; but how we are to make him do that, is the question. And yet, along with getting poor Kate Maher out of his divels clutches, of his own free will, with freedom for her to end her days in her own counthry, repenting of her sins — we must conthrive to make him do it, neighbours; or, if we don't, no other three heads on Wind-gap hill—not to talk o' the town below — will carry the point. But, how, Mayor's council, let us each go to bed, and sleep on it. To-morrow may bring us wisdom."

CHAPTER VII.

It is not, we hope, forgotten, that the council held by the wise men of Wind-gap took place on the evening when George Blundell, or, more properly, Gerald Kennedy, escaped from prison, and conferred with Harry Stokesbury. It now further appears that Maurteen Maher's sagacity was at fault, as to Stokesbury's designs upon the youth; that, in fact, his little birdeen, in other words, his sister, had failed to fathom the desperate man's present purpose; nay, it is also apparent that, about the time

when the three sages, puzzled by the business in hand, agreed to "sleep on it," in the hope of getting up more enlightened the next morning, Gerald Kennedy had already set out on his road to the destruction from which they were anxious to save him ;—to the accomplishment of that doom, indeed, predicated by Daddy Leeach for a man in his twenty-first year, and unfortunately born under the peculiar circumstances which attended Gerald's birth.

Stokesbury, upon the lad's sudden and agitated departure from the house in which they held their last conversation, prepared to follow him, to dog his steps, and keep an eye upon his motions and actions. But it happened to become most necessary for him to hold in his possession, before he and Gerald should again meet, the proofs of his young victim's parentage; and to get at these he was obliged to visit the house at the Inch; and thus some time unavoidably elapsed, ere he could proceed to ascertain

the result of his diabolical scheme of vengeance.

At length, he stood at the door of Connor Kennedy's dwelling. He listened. All seemed still and peaceable within.

"Has his heart failed him, and has he not come hither at all? or has he *done it*, and have they again lodged him in their gaol? or, has he used the second pistol, and does the roof of this silent house cover two corpses,—one of them his own?" In this manner did Harry Stokesbury commune with himself for a few moments.

Then he gave three low knocks at the door, and again listened. No one replied to his signal. He repeated it. The door still remained closed. Muttering curses against Donnelly for his lack of attention, he knocked louder and more boldly. Suddenly he started, and his figure became rigidly fixed in a position of deep and stern attention. The sharp report of a pistol-shot was heard within, reverberating to a

double compass, as it rang through the apartments of the house.

"There! he *has* used *one* of the pistols, at least," pursued the listener.

The door was suddenly pulled open;—old Joseph Fitzgerald was rushing past him into the dark and silent street.

"Stop!" cried Stokesbury, "what is the meaning of that shot in your house?"

"Oh, sir! whoever you are," answered the servant, "for heaven's sake, give christian help to secure the man that has murthered my masther in his sleep!"

"Murdered your master! and is the murderer known to you?"

"Yes, yes, sir! a young man that escaped from the common gaol this evening; his name is George Blundell."

"Aye, indeed? lead the way, then, I will secure him for you."

The white-headed servant preceded his supposed assistant up stairs, and into the drawing-room. A single chamber-light

flickered upon the table, and Gerald Kennedy was seated close to it, his elbow resting on the table, and his forehead pressing on his hand. There was one pistol lying near the candle, and another in the hand that hung at length by his chair.

"There is the murtherer," said Joseph Fitzgerald; and then, turning his regard on Stokesbury, he started back, when, in his person he recognized the strange Man of the Inch, and was about to retire from the room, muttering inaudibly.

"Stand your ground, man; I require your presence," said Stokesbury, intercepting him, locking the door, and putting the key in his pocket.

The bravo next advanced slowly to Gerald Kennedy, laid his hand on his shoulder, and shook him quietly.

The youth raised his head and looked into his friend's face.

"Well?" asked Stokesbury.

Gerald Kennedy made no answer.

"That shot?" continued Stokesbury; "the old servant tells me it was you who fired it."

"He tells you the fact," at last, replied Gerald, in a low, hoarse whisper.

"And from this pistol it was discharged?" pursued the strange Man of the Inch, taking up that which lay on the table, near the young man's elbow.

"Yes; from that pistol the shot was discharged."

Stokesbury studiously examined the weapon, with a view to ascertain if it had been recently exploded, and soon seemed satisfied of the fact. Gerald saw him smile.

"You did not want, the second?" he asked.

"No: I had, indeed, intended this one in my hand for another purpose; but I change my mind now;—the courageous midnight murderer should abide the consequences of his act;"—and Gerald Kennedy flung far

from him the pistol he had hitherto held in his right hand.

Stokesbury re-approached the old servant, and spoke to him in a low tone.

"He was asleep, I think you said, when this young ruffian murdered him?"

"Asleep in his bed," answered Joseph Fitzgerald; "my poor master got no time to pray for mercy on his soul."

"So; so:—but are you sure there are no hopes of him? Are you sure he is dead, quite dead?"

"Oh! to my sorrow I am;—dead, dead he is; aye, and could, could, by this time."

"Let me see the body."

"I will, sir;" but won't you first make sure o' the prisoner for us?"

"Ha, you are right; yes: before any thing else, I have to bring him to an account."

So saying, Harry Stokesbury again came close to Gerald Kennedy.

"Young man," he demanded, "don't

you feel quieter now? quieter, I mean, than when we last spake together?"

"Tell me what you really mean," said Gerald.

"Why, you know you have killed him; and are you not, therefore, satisfied?"

"And are not you, as well as I?"

"Listen to me. I am going to tell you something. If you happen to feel really concerned for the little act you have committed, I can comfort you. It was out of your power to have avoided something of the kind, even if you would have done so; you have but fulfilled a fate assigned to you, at your birth; before it, for aught I know."

Gerald Kennedy here stood up, and gazed steadfastly at his tormentor.

"I do not understand you," he said.

"Why, boy, the case is even thus: while you were but an infant, a small mass of creeping flesh, more helpless and more contemptible than the worm; in fact, when you

were but a few days old, I was wisely informed that, because you happened to be whelped upon a particular day, the which day, as it seemeth good to Providence, is to prove a curse to all male brats born within a certain number of its hours; — for this reason, I say, I was sagely, credibly told, that you had been doomed, upon attaining your twenty-first year, either to shed blood, or to have your own blood shed. Therefore, my lad, do not blame yourself for what you have done to-night; blame your stars, rather, which allowed you to be introduced among us, in this world, at a forbidden moment."

"There is something in your mode of speech, and in your accents, and in your look, at present, that chills me," said Gerald Kennedy; "it seems as if you would now sneer at me for doing that which you certainly set me on to do."

"Not at all, not at all; you only mistake. I merely want to reconcile you to

yourself. For is it not quite plain to you, that, when the doing of a murder, when the sluicing of human blood, had been assigned to you, by fate, or by whatever else you choose to call your Lord high Admiral aloft, you could not possibly do otherwise, than obey orders and work ship? Well, this being allowed, I now have to demand your thanks for having set you on, as you say. Remember, I had a good look-out for your personal safety, boy, after you should have fulfilled your doom by blowing out the brains of the man we used to call Mr. Connor Kennedy; this very night, in fact, if you and I continue of a mind, I can snatch you, as I before hinted, out of all reach of their bother, on the head of what you have done; and surely you now comprehend why you should thank me, do you not?"

Gerald replied, with some reason, that he did not, even yet, distinctly understand.

"Look you then, had I left you to take your own chance, in working out that ter-

rible doom that was upon you, ten to one, but yours might have been the life lost, instead of another man's; ten to one, again, but the odds might have been against you, in an encounter with a different kind of person. In Mr. Connor Kennedy I took care, however, to provide for you a man whom you could kill, without much danger of being killed by him;—and, then, as to the time and circumstances of the murder, you are still fortunate; the poor man was asleep;—his head resting comfortably upon his pillow, when you put one of my little pistols to it;—weak as was the worm, he might have turned upon you, had he been awake, you know;—and does all this shew no fatherly care of you, boy?"

"It is popularly credited," said Gerald Kennedy, "that your human shape is but an outward semblance, and that a devil of darkness possesses, animates, and governs it, and I am now inclined to adopt that belief; for ever thus, it is said, does the ene-

my of man, with wily wisdom, lead his dupe into crime, and then mocks at the wretch for having fallen."

"What! give me hard words, only for my watchfulness over your precious life? out upon you, for an ungrateful boy; yes, ungrateful you are; and there is but one other sin more heinous than ingratitude, and that one is murder; cool murder, I mean; stealthy, cowardly, midnight murder!"

"Oh! how terrible is all this!" exclaimed Gerald.

"The last time you and I laid our heads together, I told you, that when I had left Connor Kennedy trampled down on my own hearth-stone, I thought my full revenge was wreaked upon him, but that he, even in this, deceived me; nay, more, that instead of ensuring my own triumphant vengeance that night, the villain was still able to wreathe his coils closer and closer around me;—was still able to crush and sting, till

he made the remainder of my life but one long, writhing fit of shame and degradation. Well, you, good youth, had previously been placed by me, as an infant, where I could find you when I had leisure;—find you, to bring you up for any purpose, which, on reflection, should appear best to me. Well, I say, after the sentence which sent me, branded like Cain, into a strange country, I felt, whenever the recollection of your existence occurred to me, that a revenge, at last, by my own hand, upon the author of all my ruin, would not, whenever I might be able to achieve it, be half enough; — but that your hand, aye, yours only, must, from that moment, be appointed and directed to right me.—And such, at last, turns out to be the case;—and, at last, I *am* righted."

"It was a fell and baleful idea and plan," said Gerald; "and why should I,—I, your son, have been selected for effecting it? And how can my hand have avenged

you better than your own could have done ?"

"My son !—but I will answer you in my own way, and yet quite to your satisfaction, I have no doubt. Hearken to me. I have been, and I am, a bold and a courageous man. With my single arm often have I overpowered heavy odds ; but that was in fair fighting, always excepting my wish to trample, to buffet, aye, to kick to death, the dastard Connor Kennedy, never have I taken a life in cold blood ;—never have I thought of so taking one. *My* enemies were met front to front, and battle roared around us ; I pushed my full breast against them ; we encountered on the compact of the valiant ; 'Search for my heart with your sword, if your arm be stronger, or your blow surer, than mine !' no ! the poor dog that crouched and crawled for mercy, never could I smite ; but I have ever left him, mark you, to be dealt upon by meaner

hands than mine own! and in proportion to my manly disgust of a mean assassination, are my dislike and contempt of the mean assassin. Yes, the skulking, cowardly, midnight murderer I do detest;—with him I can hold no intercourse; and him I do repudiate; for in his base veins there could never have run a drop of the lion's blood that courses through mine!"

"Father, what mean you?"

"Father! reptile, spawn, poltroon, man-killer! you are, in truth, no son of mine. I lied to the teeth, when I said you were; but I lied boldly, and for my purpose, as I also did on sundry other points, with you. For instance, I told you that Kennedy had plotted against you, and then I lied: and that he had suborned Donnelly against you, and then I lied, too: and, listen to me with your soul, that he had seduced your Anny from you, and that he had injured her, and that, at last, he had married her; and again, and again, and again, and on, on to the end

of the chapter, I lied, and lied, and lied. Why? ha, ha! why? to madden you into the mood for doing what you have so nobly done! to make sure of your killing Connor Kennedy! to make sure, quite sure, of his death by your hand! by his own son's hand! Aye, at that you will gape at me; but, just as true as that you are no son of mine, it is true that you *are* the son of the man whose blood is upon you! and whose grovelling, traitor-blood gave life to your heart, fitly timing its pulses for such a good action; for, as I told you before, blood of mine could never have warmed you, or, rather, cooled you down to the perpetration of such a mean atrocity."

"Now, I do not believe you," said Gerald.

"Sirrah! not believe me?"

"No, I do not believe you; I am not Connor Kennedy's son: 'tis a fiendish fiction: 'tis an impossibility, an utter impossibility."

"And what, particularly, makes you so very incredulous?" sneered Stokesbury.

"Because I feel convinced that you, even you, devil as you are, never could conceive the thought of setting on the son to kill the father. You dare not; heaven would not suffer you to do so. I say again, I do not believe you; I say again, I am not Connor Kennedy's son."

"You have spoken well, boy, passing well. There is pith in your words; and your view of right and wrong is very correct; yes, I do myself declare it is a black and ugly deed to murder a father! and yet that deed you have done."

"I have not; for *you* live; and you are my father; you have brought me up as your offspring; you have given me the title of son, and that title I will uphold, even against yourself, before the world."

"Pish—I can easily disprove your title."

"And I dare you to that disproof!"

"Fool! and do you think I cannot make my words good?—Do you think me so very poor an artificer as that my patient work of nearly twenty years is likely to be blown down by a puff of your flimsy breath?—Silly cur!—I had anticipated your present attempt to palm yourself upon me, even before I entered this house to-night. And now, to begin my course of proof."

He took off the handkerchief which usually half-covered his face, and continued,

"Joseph Fitzgerald, old and faithful servant of my father's house,—do you recollect your former master?"

"Oh, sir, sir," answered the man, "great wondher comes upon me with your words,—I don't know what reply to make you!"

"Time has, doubtless, changed me; the weather has pelted on me, and the sun has scorched me; you see before you, however, the master you have long thought dead. Go for your wife, and lead her hither directly."

"My wife, you said, sir!" repeated Joseph, looking more and more frightened.

"Yes, man—your wife—did I not speak distinctly?—Tell her that Harry Stokesbury summons her to speak with him. Tell her to remember the evening when young Harry Stokesbury forced Connor Kennedy's brat from her arms; tell her to remember that he then warned her she should be called upon, at a future day to identify the traitor's bantling;—and tell her that the time is now come. Retire, I say, and lead your wife up to this room."

He opened the door, and the servant withdrew. He went on, to Gerald—

"Yes, son of Connor Kennedy, I will soon demonstrate to you who is, or rather who was your father, and, how full, and how true, has, therefore, been my revenge. In one point, alone, I have not quite satisfied myself.—Before the very last gasp left his body, he did not know who killed him; oh!—would that he could have known it!

And, trust me, often and often have I pondered to try and arrange that he should be made acquainted with the relationship between him and his executioner. But it was impossible to compass it, without putting both of you on your guard. And when you lay in yonder gaol, too, by my contrivance, another mode of vengeance on him slightly occurred to me. For a moment I thought it might be practicable to change my tactics; to get you tried, convicted, and excellently well hanged for the abduction of Anny Kennedy, making him a witness against you;—and then, after your popular exit from this world, I would have just whispered to him the story of your parentage.—But my chief witness, Donnelly, I could not depend upon, at the push; he was what you call a person of bad character, and, besides, any man's servant, either in truth or in falsehood, for the heaviest bribe;—indeed, you have yourself heard him admit as much, a few hours ago. But no matter. Although

Connor Kennedy could not, lest our plan might fail, get a hint in this world of who it was I doomed to take his life, yet, as very good people say there is another world, perhaps he knows it now;—and, indeed, for the especial consolation of my heart, never, before this hour have I felt half so inclined to be a firm believer on that knotty subject."

Joseph Fitzgerald re-entered, conducting his wife, both agitated and trembling to excess.

"I am tould," began the woman, "there is one here who says he is the Masther Harry Stokesbury?"

"Come hither, dame.—You nursed for a few days Connor Kennedy's and Mary Bryan's first and only son?" The servant assented.

"You have received the message I sent to you this moment by your husband?—and you have understood it?"—She again answered affirmatively.

"Well. Examine these things atten-

tively."—He took a small box from his bosom, opened it, and placed it on the table. "Have you seen them before? Are these the rags in which your own hands clothed Connor Kennedy's son, before you took him to nurse at your house? And do you find upon them the marks which I, Harry Stokesbury, directed you to put upon them, before I dragged your charge over your threshold?"

"Whether it comes to pass that you are Masther Harry Stokesbury or not," she replied, "these are the same clothes Connor Kennedy's son had on him, when Masther Harry Stokesbury took away the child from me."

"So;—and look at this too; can you call this little thing to mind?" he continued.

"Oh! mercy be to me! It is the gospel I hung round the infant's neck, to save him from his evil doom," answered the woman.

"Yes!" scoffed Stokesbury, close into Gerald's face,—"and thus I learned the

fable of your famous doom — the doom I have led you here to-night to accomplish, as I before told you—and learned it from this woman's lips, when by chance I asked the meaning of the silly amulet she had appended to your little carcase. Ha!—And you begin to admit my proofs, do you?—Yes; I see that horror is on your face;—I see that your cheek is livid; I see that a cold sweat trickles down your forehead, and that your limbs totter beneath you. But there is stronger proof of the true nature of the cowardly murder you have just committed. Attend, sirrah; attend, closely.—Woman!" he went on aloud, and now imperiously and passionately, "you will recollect that I ordered you to notice a something on the arm of Connor Kennedy's whelp?"

"May the Heavens save us!—and it is the same voice I now hear that said the same words to me more than twenty years ago!"

"Right—the same voice, the very same. But did I not order you to note that mark? And when you had done so, did you not call it a cherry-mark, caused, you would have me believe, from a cherry having been flung in play at his mother, before his birth? but no matter what you said—was there not a reddish spot of that kind on the young toad's arm?"

"I recollect every word you say, sir;—it is all as fresh to my mind as if it happened but yesterday."

"Examine your arm, then, Gerald Kennedy—and I call you at last by your true name;—I have, before now, allowed you to peer at *my* arm."

The unhappy young man suddenly sat down, as if from total incapacity to stand; placed his elbows on the table, and fully covered his face with his hands; and tears stole through his fingers, as in a weak and broken voice he said—"The mark is upon my arm."

"And my proof complete!" said Stokesbury; "and Connor Kennedy's murderer, *is* Connor Kennedy's son!—And that son knows as much!—Knows, too, that I set him on to kill his scoundrel parent—and why I did so!—Cur! you have named *me*—father—and the words came like the serpent's hiss into my ear; for, when you gave me that title, I called to mind that you were the offspring of my direst enemy—that you were of the loathed blood of him who duped, abused, robbed, plundered, branded, banished me! and who had wiled Mary Bryan from my arms!—Oh! spume of the old reptile!—but that I cherished you as my avenger, I could have struck you to my foot, and spurned you, and spat upon you, when you dared so to address me—Ha! but no matter!—From Connor Kennedy's own slime has crawled the younger adder to sting him to the death!—from the tissue of his own infernal plottings have I woven the

web of his ruin—insinuating into the middle of it the spider-spawn that was to clutch and strangle its bloated begetter!—Ha!—he taught me—he taught me!—Aye—and for this I brought you up, Gerald Kennedy! No one else, I say to you, again, could have been my executioner upon your father!—root and branch he withered me,—and root and branch I have withered him!—True—I bear his brand upon my arm, and his curse still deeper branded into my heart!—true—I walk through the world, a mere black shadow of man, cast from an identity, a person of man, that I dare not name or avow. All that is true!——But something is done, now, to reconcile me to my lot!—that loathsome villain's son has shed his blood at my will!—and, branded as I am, that son shall be as branded! The high gallows, to be sure, he may escape; for I suppose he will have friends in this little nook to back him! But even if he live, whenever he walks forth, the veriest heart-

rotten wretches in existence, and the most virtuous people—the veriest sinners, and the most innocent children—shall join in one cry against him—and that one cry shall be Parricide!"—

Gerald Kennedy, as if suddenly recovering his strength, sprung up from the position and attitude in which we have last described him; traces of tears still deep upon his cheek;—

"Dreadful man!" he said, "you have, indeed, drawn a terrific, and yet a true picture of the fate of a parricide; and, oh my God!" he continued, flinging himself upon his knees, straining his eyes, and stretching his arms upwards, while the tone of his voice was deep, fervent, and intense,—"Almighty Eye of the universe! behold before thee, an erring, and a humbled being! but accept, Omnipotent, the gratitude of a stricken, bursting heart, which gives thee praise and adoration, because that of parent's blood, or of the blood of any of Thy crea-

tures, I am guiltless—guiltless—guiltless!"

"What say you, worm,—guiltless?" cried Stokesbury, starting back.

Gerald Kennedy again stood firmly on his feet, and his person erected itself to the full of its lofty height; and now a flush of exultation overspread hi face, and his eye flashed a calm defiance, as with energy and grace he continued:

"Yes, guiltless of all taint of blood, I am; and not only guiltless of my father's blood, but standing here my father's protector against the universe! These arms to defend him, and this body as a tower of strength between him and myriads No, no; I care not if his enemy be man, or devil—his son is able to shield him from all harm."

He paused a moment, a little exhausted; and Harry Stokesbury only devoured him with his eye, but did not answer him.

"Stokesbury—Stokesbury,—you have shown but a slight knowledge of human

nature. Stokesbury, although double my age, you have shewn only that. Do you think, young, and strong, as I am, I could have submitted so long to your taunts, had not my bosom's innocence supported me against them? Had I really been the murderer of my father, to my own conviction, do you suppose, I could have so tamely listened to your reproaches, in consequence of the act? Tush! no! I listened to you merely because I had an object to attain from your vehemence; an object, the dearest that interests my present existence. Aye — Stokesbury — under competent instructions I wanted to gain from you—the only man who could supply it—proof, full proof, that I had not the misfortune to be your son. And, sir, you are quite right in an observation you made a little while ago — you saw me pale, and weak, and horrified, when you named all the proofs which made me Connor Kennedy's son, supposing me to be his murderer. But

again you mistook—you interpreted into the outward show of a guilty conscience, what were only the workings of an affrighted and an abstracted soul. Yes—my cheek was livid, and the damp was upon my brow; but these signs came simply because I was smitten to my very heart as you carefully presented before me the portraiture of the hideous crime to which you had provoked me, and of which I felt I might possibly have been guilty. Yes, Stokesbury, the mere idea that I had been on the road to become a parricide made cold the very marrow in my bones—cold—cold—as the northern ice. Stokesbury—when I rushed from your presence, out of the house, to which you last brought me, the spirit you had put into me, and the spirit you had sent with me, did not accompany me far. There was a mild coolness in the breeze of the night which, as it flitted against my burning brow and breast, wafted to me an exorcising human feeling. Such a feeling as could not

commit a murder.—I paused.—I looked towards the heavens,—the deep-blue sky was thickly strewn with its sparklings of Infinity! and some glorious stars were preeminently large, and bright, and pure; and I suddenly thought they might have been some of the many strong eyes of the great God—which we know, are always above us, and around us, looking down, not angrily, but oh! how much more chidingly than if angry, upon my hellish purpose! And with the thought of Him, Stokesbury, with the suddenly unfolded, and re-expanded idea of Him, His grace showered upon my heart; and I fancied that the stars I had been looking at arranged themselves into the words of some mightly language inscribing across the expanse of the whole firmament—"Thou shalt do no murder!"—and I seemed to feel that the bland and odorous breeze became instinct and articulate, and like the whisper of a child—angels syllabled the same command into mine ear! And then, Stokesbury,

(and at last I call upon you, in my turn, to listen, for *you* have often called upon *me* this evening to listen to you)—then, Harry Stokesbury, tears burst from my scorching eyes—aye in torrents did they burst, and I was not, and I am not ashamed of them; and my knees, of their own accord, sunk under me, and I could pray. And, after having prayed, I could reflect! and the black cloud that you had hung over my soul rolled away from it, like the morning mist from the obscured mountain; and oh—then—then—came the conviction of the enormity of the horrible deed I had left you to perpetrate! And I firmly resolved not only to shed no blood of the man whom you said had injured me, but I also resolved—because I feared you, Stokesbury—to hinder you, from shedding his blood by your own hand, or by any other hand, or means—and after this resolution, I was calm enough to proceed to the bed-side of a friend, although an humble one, who, before I knocked at

his door, had resigned himself to the quiet of sleep, and a good conscience; and he did not prove lukewarm to my summons, or my necessity; and, in fact, we spoke at length together; and, by his advice, I came here to meet you as I have met you."

"And pray, who is this sage?" demanded Stokesbury;—"and where is he now?"

"I am very glad to tell you he is *there*," answered Gerald, pointing to a large folding screen, at one side of the extensive old fashioned chamber; and as Harry Stokesbury turned his scowling, inquisitive eyes, in that direction, they rested upon the spare features of the Mayor of Wind-gap, who, with his osier-wand of office, in his right hand, sedately advanced: immediately fol-followed by a very aged white-headed man, who came forward, leaning on his polished staff, to take his station at the Mayor's right hanc; and by a younger personage, who with many obesiances, also assumed his

station at the Mayor's left hand. And in this order, the three at last stood still, full to the chin of the important business in which they were called on to interfere, and pronounce their judgment.

CHAPTER VII.

On board his fast-scudding ship, Stokesbury's rough-and-ready crew thought little of the boisterousness of their commander which used to flare out and betray itself in violent words and actions, on trivial occasions. But when he paced his quarter-deck, up and down, taking no notice of them, or of any thing around him; uttering not a word; and his brow half-hiding his inward-turned eye, and his arms folded hard into each other; when thus they beheld him, the scoundrels would look to

their weapons—well knowing from experience that a desperate business was to be engaged in, of the nature of which, however, they were to learn nothing until the moment should arrive for taking it in hand.

And such now was the expression of his knotted brow, and such was his calm unexcited austerity of manner.

He and Maurteen Maher eyed each other for a moment. His worship spake first.

"Yes, masther Harry Stokesbury, its tee-totally of my conthrivance; the poor boy came to me, in a great puzzle of mind; and when I coaxed him to tell every thing, the thought enthered into my head to advise him to make a purtense of doing what you wanted him to do; because I guessed that if you were sure the deed was done, you'd be for provin' plain to him that he was the son of the murthered man."

"In the devil's name, who are you?" aske Stokesbury.

"Why, for the matther of that, we'll neither say nor do, make question nor give answer, in the divil's name; we want to have no rubbins to his sort; we are not his sarvants. And, more be token, masther Harry, to remind you that the divil and myself are no great cronies, did'nt I spile sport on him this very night?"

"Who, or what are you, I say?"

"And don't you remember axin' me that question before now, the night of the last bonfire? and don't you remember the plain answer I made you, masther Harry?"

"No fellow! I have no recollection whatever of you; speak plain, now, and at once, and curse you!"

"Och, as to the curse, *crossh-chrustha* between you and me, and all harm, amin: but its known to all the neighbours that I hould authority over the Mayor of this town; I have rule of Wind-gap hill, and I belive that's a step above him, by raison its on a hoighth if there was no other

raison. And I'm come here to-night, me and my mayor's council, that you see at ach side o' me, to bring pace and good will, undher God, masther Harry Stokesbury; to fend, and to prove, and to make the right appear clear before the world."

"We'll see the right done, plaze God," said ould Daddy Leeach; and Gregory Roche gave his consent by iterating with a bow, "plaze God."

Stokesbury continued for a space, staring at the law-givers, as if to make them out, or comprehend the nature of their interference. Suddenly, with a careless shrug, he turned to Gerald Kennedy:

"I neither understand nor care about this mummery," he said "but you know me as the foe of you and yours; — look to yourself;—my arm is over you;—look to yourself."

He strode about the room in the manner we have already attributed to him, when on board his pirate ship; he paused; he

scrutinized anew the strange group near him; and then slowly and coolly he was leaving the apartment.

"You cannot pass us yet, Masther Harry," said Maurteen Maher, intercepting him.

"No! and who opposes my free passage?" laughed Stokesbury.

"I!" answered Maurteen, "but 'tis only for your good, and the good of others; we want to know your intentions, and to make you have good intentions, afore you quit us."

"Out of my way, idiot!" The bravo raised his hand.

The Mayor on his part struck his wand of office sharply against the floor; and Stokesbury was instantly seized by four powerful fellows who issued from behind the screen whence his worship himself had made his appearance; and one of them was Meehawl O' Moore, the man of straw, upon the night of the bonfire; and another was

was the young giant who had masqueraded as his female companion, on the same occasion. Stokesbury was so truly taken by surprize that he could offer no resistance; and in a few seconds he found himself deprived of his pistols, which he wore in his belt, under his cloak, and of the sinister-looking hanger which dangled at his side.

Directly Stokesbury was secured, and rendered incapable of doing what the Mayor of Windgap feared he might do, namely, an outrage in the house which covered them both. Maurteen commanded his satellites to leave the pirate free, loudly adding, "and take yourselves home to Wind-gap, now, as fast as ye can trot, and go to your beds, and sleep away the remainder o' the night, or rather, the morning that's left; but," he added, into the ear of Mee-hawl O'Moore, without any person's observation, "Stay in this house, for all that; and if ye do any thing better than another, keep a strict watch on the door of Mr. Ken-

nedy's room;" and so his efficient, but illegal, bailiffs departed.

The Mayor now regularly turned to the business before him; and, in proceeding with it, proved not only that he had well studied his part, but also the character of the man he had to deal with.

Without at all losing sight of his own dignity, he began by craving Stokesbury's forgiveness for having ordered his detention: and explaining himself upon the grounds that he had acted for Stokesbury's own good, as well as of that of every other human being; and that his only objects were the promotion of "pace and quietness, and making the right appear."

For he knew that Stokesbury's deadly and devilish rage against his cousin proceeded from a misapprehension of that cousin's conduct, in all the matters which related to them both. He knew that, by the villanous contrivances of Kynan Donnelly, Harry Stokesbury had been induced to re-

gard Connor Kennedy in the light in which the unfortunate bravo had represented him to Gerald, while urging the young man to become a murderer. He knew that Stokesbury, originally engrossed by an all-absorbing hatred and passion, as well as by his rapid changes from place to place, each being remote from the other, and particularly by the mode of life in which he was now confirmed, had neither had wish nor opportunity to undeceive himself; he knew, in fact, that up to the present moment, he had acted altogether on false impressions; and the peacemaker of Wind-gap now set about placing the true state of the case before Stokesbury's eyes.

The reader is already generally acquainted with the facts necssary to be detailed for the object he had in view, by Maurteen Maher, in order "to make the right appear." But Maurteen did not content himself with mere assertions: upon each point necessary to be established he was ready, either with

proofs or with witnesses. By the very mouth of the person who had drawn up old Stokesbury's will, and who awaited his summons in a contiguous apartment, he demonstarted, not only that Connor Kennedy had not intrigued to have that instrument moulded to his purposes, or in his favour, but that he had endeavoured, by every means, to prevent it from being so framed; nay, that the very moment it had came into his hands he had destroyed it.

By another evidence, as well as by the production of authenticated accounts, he proved that Connor Kennedy, so far from making use of the yearly proceeds of his cousin's paternal property, had most profitably accumulated them; and, moreover, to the sum thus realized, he had added the unfortunate Mary Bryan's dower, living only upon the pittance of its interest, and destining all as a provision for Stokesbury's daughter Anny.

His worship of Wind-gap further de-

monstrated that Connor Kennedy was not to be blamed for his cousin's miserable exposure at the bar of justice; inasmuch as he had been a poor maniac at the time, and for many years subsequently; and one of the most important points of his case, that Mary Bryan and Connor Kennedy had been man and wife two months before the drawing of old Stokesbury's will; and that, of course, their marriage had not been brought about in order to accommodate themselves in the Law's eye to its provisions.

Having gone so far in his case, Maurteen Maher paused a moment to observe what effect it and his own oratory had produced. When he first began to speak, he saw that he was listened to with lofty, tho' suppressed, rage and withering contempt, alone. To this succeeded a haughty indifference and an air of abstraction, real or assumed. But when the person who had drawn up the will entered the room, and declared what he knew, Stokesbury's look

and manner evinced a great and stern surprise. Then he shewed incredulity and contempt again. He condescended, however, to cross-question this witness, and, finding him firm and consistent, his features, despite of his evident attempts to master them, now wore an astounded expression.

Connor Kennedy's accounts were laid before him by a confidential clerk. He snatched the books, and examined them with a deep frowning attention; sometimes looking off the columns of figures, straight before him, with a vague stare; or drawing in his lips, or heaving long, hard sighs: and when, at length, his investigation had ended, he sat motionless on his chair, his clenched hands resting upon his knees.

The Mayor of Wind-gap, not quite dissatisfied with these signs of the inward workings of the man, judiciously went forward, in course, to the most difficult topic he had to approach and arrange.

He began it by speaking of Kynan Don-

nelly. Without yet making effective use of him, he dwelt upon his character, as deceptive, lying, venal, and treacherous; appealed to Stokesbury to admit his general assertions, and experienced, at least, no dissent, from them. He next roundly accused the fellow of treachery towards Stokesbury himself; nay, and of a deeper kind than he had ever practised upon any one else. The listener started up, fully aroused and earnest. Maurteen repeated what he had said, and then divided his accusation into separate charges, the last of which seemed to drive Stokesbury almost frantic.

"Since proofs are so ready to your hand, old man, these things you must prove to me, as clear as the day's light, by heaven!" he cried.

"Nothin' aisier in life, Masther Harry, dear," replied the Mayor, smiling; "and before continuing regularly, he dwelt upon the heinousness of Donnelly's ingratitude,

in being capable of committing towards his old master, and first and best benefactor, deception or wrong of any kind; and Maurteen mixed up with all this a due portion of deferential bearing, and a little judicious flattery towards "Masther" Harry Stokesbury; and he repeated "nothin' asier in life, as I tould you afore; will the words out of his own mouth bring content to your mind? if we can conthrive, with the little sense the Lord gave us, to have you overhear him confess every thing I lay at his dour, what will you think of us, then, Masther Harry?"

In fine, his worship, with many entreaties, prevailed upon Stokesbury to retire behind the screen, before spoken of; then went down stairs; returned with Donnelly by his side; led him close to the screen, and began speaking with him in a tone of voice sufficiently low not to reach the ears of his council and of Gerald Kennedy, who stood at the opposite corner of the room,

and yet loud enough to convey to Stokesbury every word they interchanged together.

"Kynan Donnelly, every thing is done clever, in the way that you and I layed it but; Harry Stokesbury is in the body of the goal."

"And you tould him that you had me locked up on the same score?" asked the ruffian.

"I tould him so, sure enough;—just as you did me do, Kynan, my boy."

"Was there any notion in his head that I turned agin him, in the long run, Maurteen?"

"Masther, aye; now that you remind me of it, I won't say but there was somethin' o' the kind in his head, honest Kynan; for when Roger Divey, and all the rest o' them, were taking him away to his night's lodging, a little while ago, he turned round to me, and, with a look that frightened me, says he, 'this is Donnelly's doins,' says

he; 'tell him I know him; tell him that I found out a thiny, or two, about him, since we last parted; tell him that I know it was between him and Roger Divey I was sould the night I broke open the Inch house; tell him that it was by his contrivance Mary Bryan was married to Connor Kennedy; and tell him over again," says he, "that I'll pay him for all together, before he and I are much oulder."

"Murdher and fury! did he spake those words to you, Maurteen Maher?"

"The very words I tell to you he spoke to me."

"By the night that's in'id! an' I had a fear all along of his comin', somehow, to that knowledge. Oh! if 'tis a thing he gets free this time, I'm a gone man! I would'nt give a rotten *thrauneen* for my own life, if ever he comes again beyond the goal dour. Were the life of ten cats in me, he'd have em all: were I hidin' twenty perches under the ground, he'd dig me up, and he'd dhrag

me up into the day-light, and another day-light I'd never see."

"You say what's thrue enough, Kyran Donelly," assented the Mayor of Wind-gap, with very much of the air and manner of a Job's comforter.

"There's but one way left for me to turn; I must jump up on the green cloth, and sware agin him on his thrial; I have more knowledge of his ways than'ud hang twenty men!"

"It's well guessed you have, Kynan; I know, of my own knowledge, that no one can tell betther nor you who forced off Juff Carroll's daughther."

"It was himself! and I'll prove it agin him; there's no one to stand up for Kynan Donnelly, now, but Kynan Donnelly's four bones."

"And taking away Miss Anny Kennedy, too?" continued Maurteen Maher.

"Yes, and that, too;—I'll sware down all, all I know, to hang him well, well!"

"But if you didn't sware agin him, at all, Kynan, it's the like enough he'd forgive you, as Connor Kennedy did."

"Forgive me! oh, never, till the day of judgment, and the day after it, into the bargain, if *he* knows *me* as, he says, *I* know *him*."

"But, sure, he'd understand, now, after twenty years, at laste, there was no great blame to be laid to you for bringing about the marriage between Mary Bryan and Connor Kennedy? Did'nt he give you good cause for a little revenge of that kind, a short while afore?"

"Who tould you o' that?" demanded Donnelly, in surprise.

"Oh! I was good friends with your poor Nance Dunney; I had a liking for her as well as yourself, and I could have found it in my heart to give a helping hand at the killing o' Masther Harry, when he brought the destruction on her young head; and sure, as I said afore, you had some

right to make Mary Bryan turn away from him, when he took Nance Dunney from you."

"I know there was little blame to me for doing what I did; I had a long love for Nance, and I'd do any thing, at that time, to be even with him, on her account."

"No wondher, no wondher; and, sure, if you hadn't tould him all them stories about Connor Kennedy, Masther Harry and he would have come together again, in the long run, and you would have been found out, wouldn't you?"

"Aye, aye; but they'd lay their heads together, and I'd be done for instead of Connor Kennedy."

"There's little doubt of that, I believe," again agreed the Mayor, gravely nodding at him; "and wasn't it the same thing over again, the night he broke into the Inch-house? Sure, if Roger Divey and yourself hadn't brought the army on him,

he'd have soon come to the bottom of the whole business?"

"There's no denyin' id, Maurteen Maher."

"Well, well," continued Maurteen more gravely, and even ominously: "and I'm not far asthray, Kynan Donnelly, if what you're afther sayin' dosen't turn out to be enough *to make the blind get back their eye-sighth.*"

While laying particular emphasis on these last words, Maurteen allowed, as if by chance, his wand of office to tap against the screen; and while Donnelly was gazing at the Mayor, to try and ascertain the cause of his altered tone and manner, his eyes followed those of his worship, and rested on the person of Harry Stokesbury.

The effect produced upon the scoundrel was inexpressible. He saw that he was betrayed on every side, and that the man whose power he regarded as almost unbounded, and whose retaliation he well knew to be terrible, was now in full possession of

his villanous practices. He could not withdraw his glance from that of the object of his dread, which became immediately, and overpoweringly, fixed on his. His cheeks and lips grew ashy-livid, and his limbs shook till they smote each other.

"I have been listening to you," said Stokesbury, in a deep, guttural under-voice, "and I need not tell you I will answer you."

He re-commenced his former hasty pace about the room, while Donnelly staggered into a corner. He stopped—turned his regards on the floor, and seemed wrapped up in his thoughts; and he stopped only a few feet from the spot to which Donnelly had retired. Suddenly the wretch's eye caught the pistol flung away by Gerald Kennedy: he cringed down cautiously for it; and, his sole impulse being now to rid himself of the tremendous man whom he had just aroused to vengeance—the weapon was instantly at Stokesbury's ear. Gerald Ken-

nedy sprang forward, and seized, and bore down his arm.

"What!" muttered Stokesbury to himself, "and is that action possible from that boy?—Is it really possible, from what they call their human nature?" And he looked on with a stern, half-smiling, curiosity and interest.

"Let go my arm," said Donnelly, in a shivering whisper, as if he spoke confidentially, what he deemed worthy of attention from the person he addressed. "Let go my arm!—didn't you hear the words he said? I remember well they were the same he spoke when he made up his mind to kill Connor Kennedy. Let go my arm, I say."

Gerald still only endeavoured to wrest the pistol from him.

"By the fire of hell, then!" roared Donnelly, forgetting his former intention, and suddenly fixing his vengeance on the person who had crossed him:—"Your life, or my life, for it!"

They struggled again. Stokesbury took a half step forward, as if to interfere, and by one twist of his arm end the dispute; but, keenly eyeing the vigorous efforts of Gerald, he arrested himself, still strangely smiling. We have said, that Meehawl O'Moore, and his three sub-bailiffs, had retired to do duty in a remote part of the house: old Joseph Fitzgerald had for some time also withdrawn, to share his terrors with his wife; so that, except Stokesbury, and the Mayor of Wind-gap and his council, no one was now present to interrupt the deadly tug which went on. Stokesbury, however, would not interrupt it; and when old "Daddy Leeach" courageously, though impotently, and when Gregory Roche, politely, though in a very cowardly fashion, made signs of peace-making, Maurteen Maher giving way, notwithstanding "the little sense that the Lord had blessed him with," and that the "neighbours" had avouched he possessed, to the leaven of

superstition, imbedded in his habits, authoritatively waived his wand, and cried out—

"No, Shawn Leeach! No, Gregory Roche! Let ach man o'ye keep back! It is his doom! It is his doom, that he's working through! it is the hour of his doom that is coming upon him! He will kill, or he'll be killed on the spot! Let no man meddle with his doom!"

Daddy Leeach and Gregory Roche could, therefore, only look on, during the exciting contest; the snowy head of the former, universally palsied with great anxiety, and the latter, ejaculating, in fear or in admiration, at intervals.

But the Mayor of Wind-gap spoke most and loudest:—"Gorsoon," said he, "your hour is come! Mind yourself! Mind yourself, Gerald Kennedy! He is a sthrong man you're wrastling with—your life is at the risk, boy! Oh Mother of God! you are doing a foolish thing now! Take your hand from his throath!—and hould *his* hand, that

has got the pistol in it! Och! och! och! He does not heed me! It is at your head, now, Gerald Kennedy!, Och! the Lord be with you!—but no,—the pistol wasn't cocked, or you were dead! And now he's cocking it with his teeth! Take your hand from his throath, I bid ye!—take your hand from his throath!"

The combatants here fell on the floor together. Gerald Kennedy under Donnelly; and a cry of terror burst from the Mayor and his council. A second time Henry Stokesbury stepped forward, perhaps to the young man's aid; but before he could manifest his intentions, the pistol exploded. For an instant, Gerald and Donnelly were hidden by its smoke; after which the former jumped up, unhurt, shaking from him the dead body of his antagonist; it was, however, the wretch's own finger which had pulled the trigger of the weapon, without knowing it, its muzzle had been pointed to his own head.

The Mayor and his wise men hurried to Gerald, and overpowered him with congratulations;—they turned to observe Stokesbury. His eyes were rivetted upon the youth, with, Maurteen Maher thought, something like a manly and generous expression;—nay, the old philosopher of Wind-gap deemed that "Masther Henry" appeared half-inclined, also to step forward, and shake him by the hand. But Joseph Fitzgerald, if possible still more terrified than ever, re-entered the room, and saying, "From your cousin, Mr. Kennedy, sir," presented a letter to his old master.

Stokesbury tore open the seal, read the letter, and stood motionless, and, to all who saw him, incomprehensible, in the middle of the apartment. Moisture stole over his forehead, which he wiped off with his spread palm. He read the epistle again. He clasped his hands over the crown of his head; he dragged them down, slowly, and pressed them tight across his eyes. They

unclasped themselves, and he quickly, and often, glanced towards Gerald :—he seemed indecisive,—uncharactered ;—or, we might more properly say, perhaps, beginning to be re-charactered. After another short pause, he walked suddenly to the lad—seized both his wrists, and wrung them; then turned as suddenly to Maurteen Maher, and whispered a word to him; then said to Joseph Fitzgerald,—"My answer is—'No, not to-night;'" and after this, he slowly quitted the apartment, and the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY the next day, Maurteen Maher, pretending that it was a favourable one "for the sport," buckled on his fishing-basket, and, with his angle in his hand, sauntered slowly along the river's bank. Brother sportsmen thought him grown very ungracious of a sudden, however; for they remarked that the sun shone hotly upon the water, and the most foolish young trout beneath its surface would have sense enough to remain, till the cool of the evening, at least, as near the bottom of the river as

possible. But, careless of these criticisms, the Mayor pursued his way, and might be seen, at a little distance from Wind-gap screwing together his fishing-rod, and gravely making all necessary preparations for engaging in his favorite pastime. The only persons who ventured to vindicate the sanity of his proceedings, after he had turned his back on his subjects, were his council, Shawn Leeach and Gregory Roche; and then it became publicly whispered that he and they had been stricken—"the three o' them together," and at one and the same time, with a very singular want of common sense; and great was the sensation of awe and regret thereby impressed upon "the neighbours." Nor was it till the real object of old Maurteen's ramble, that day, became guessed at, some time after, that he and his superior law-givers were re-instated in popular confidence.

At a lonely spot, by the river's side, about a mile from his commonwealth, Maur-

teen encountered a man, carefully disguised, in a great coat, bushy wig, and an uncouthly-shaped hat. They seemed to meet by previous appointment; and, while they spoke at length together, Maurteen in a cautious voice, and the other in a broken, half-wailing one, now took the private path to the house at the Inch, and, unobserved by any person, entered it at the rear.

We next find Maurteen seated at the curiously-carved table, in the curiously-furnished room of which, on a former occasion, we have had a passing knowledge. Henry Stokesbury sits before him, and they are alone.

The countenance of the old diplomatist, notwithstanding a previous resolution to keep it calm and impassive, was sharpened and lengthened into a curious expression of shrewd investigation and reasoning, of doubting, and hoping, and balancing, of gratified good-feeling, and of wary anxiety. The character of that of the pirate,

we scarce venture to indicate. Its sternness, its fierceness, its sneer, its recklessness, its daring, still remained stamped upon it; yet these qualities of his mind and habits might, perhaps, be said at present to be exteriorly legible, rather from the remains of the effects of their former physical manifestation, than from any outward play of them, which, as Maurteen Maher studied his companion, now met the eye. Oftener than in his life before, his powerful glances were half veiled beneath his falling lids, or else they dropped upon the floor. He sat quieter, and more posed than usual: and, above all things, his voice was modulated, generally speaking, into sounds that did not startle, or offend, or grate on the ear of a listener; although, now and then, Maurteen found that the most slightly-injudicious word or question, or something not clearly understood, or else caught up without sufficient examination, was enough to bring an echo of the old explosions round his head.

The two had for some time been conversing; they continued, after a pause; old Maurteen leading the discourse, as, indeed, he had done since they sat down together.

"In the name of Him who is ever ready to forgive us all, you had betther see that man, Masther Harry, *a chorra;* just let me send to the town for him—won't you?"

"No.—But I do not refuse, because I do not forgive;—tush—I have nothing to forgive—nothing, to a human creature, except myself. 'Tis not that;—no; but I cannot bring myself to look upon his face;—'twas always hateful to me; and how can it become pleasing to me of a sudden?"

"No, Masther Harry,—I ax your pardon for bein' unmannerly enough to make a contradiction; but, long afore it grew hateful to you, it was plasin' to you; and for a good rason—it had a great likeness to another one you loved dearly—to your own mother's."

"Hum—and that is true." He turned

aside his head, and remained without speaking a moment; then resumed—"but no, no—curse it, no! Be silent, old fellow, on that point in future. And let us now end all our business. You can lead the girl back into the town. She prefers it to leaving Ireland with me. So let her have her way. I deserve it from her. Pshaw! I deserve every thing—its to your sister's affair—take her too, and settle it, and her, as you like. Here's a little bag of old gold for her; buy up your Mayoralty of Wind-gap with it, and share the estate between ye."

"Buy up Wind-gap wid id, Sir?" smiled, nay, almost laughed, nay, almost grinned the Worshipful Maurteen Maher, unconsciously descending, a moment, from his staid point of habitual, self-commanding gravity. "And do you think there is enough o' goold in it, for that same?"

"Poh, nonsense! don't annoy me further upon a matter already settled."

Maurteen weighed the money-bag between his hands, and drew a long sigh.

"It's a truth," he resumed, "that there must be a great dale o' the goold in it, but I'll tell you what's come into my mind, Masther Harry; I covet no more out of it, nor out o' you, than what will keep my poor sisther from wantin' the bare bread, while she's alive on this earth, repentin' of her sins, and if there's more than that in the little bag, I'd rather not take it home with me."

Stokesbury laughed. "Oh yes! I see; you think 'tis money not honestly come by; and, therefore, you won't have it, lest it should turn into bits of slate in your hands. Well, well, as you like; keep no portion of it you don't think yourself entitled to, but hand over the conscientious surplus to your chaplain, and he, I suppose, will know what to do with it."

"If you mane," answered Maurteen, "to help the poor priest of our chapel, and the

poor chapel itself, Masther Harry, I don't see a betther thing you could do with any odds and ends ye may have to spare; he's a poor little ould man, God know's; and as to the poor little ould chapel, too, the rain does be dhroppin' down through the rotten thatch of its roof, over his bald head, while he says Mass to us of a Sunday; an' sure when you'd have the prayers o' the Christhins for a good action o' that sort, twouldn't be money thrown away, supposin' you were a man as free from sin as the child is that never was born."

"Folly, I say, old oddity; I don't want your preachments to day; I've been thinking of one thing or another without your help; take charge of this second little canvass bag, and share it as you like, between your two chaplains, below there—your loyal one, and your popish one; and hark ye, just tell them both to serve it out, amongst such poor devils as the world—

mark ye, as the world — thinks want it least."

"The Lord reward ye!" muttered Maurteen piously, and heart-touched; for he saw that under the words and the manner of Harry Stokesbury, there was still something like a conviction of wrong, and a wish for, at least, earthly atonement. "The Lord reward ye, as ye deserve to be rewarded, from your present feelings."

"Amen, old man!" said Stokesbury, hastily, and his companion scarce heard his words, nor was he himself quite conscious of them.

"What did you say, Masther Harry?"

"Nothing, nothing; but here's a little silk purse, full enough of guineas, too, that you are to leave at the door of a foolish man, here, one Carroll I think; and there may be other people in this neighbourhood who imagine I have annoyed them; and for their whims also, there is provision enough under my hands, at your Worship's service;

and so now, stuff the only fishes you have caught to-day into that ridiculous looking basket on your back; and as Anny is clamorous for your protection into the town—a curious old fellow you must be by the way, to make us all so dependent on you. You may go look for her through the house; and you'll find her in some chamber, closeted with your sister—whom she has already made a saint of—and that Juff Carroll's daughter, and Juff Carroll's niece into the bargain; and then you may lead the whole bevy where ye like, and do whatever you wish with them; quick, quick! for I have something else to think of before night."

"But your own daughther won't lave the house, without seeing you, Masther Harry?" queried Maurteen.

"Oh yes, yes, she will! she does not wish to see any more of me, she wishes, from her heart," he added, in the most humane tone, which Maurteen had yet heard him utter,

"she wishes from her heart, that she had never, never seen me, or heard of me."

"And I'll be bound, you are wrong again, Masther Harry, in saying that; I have a way of my own, in finding out what a body thinks of another body; and I know one thing this moment—Miss Anny would cross the says with you, from Ireland's ground, if she could only hear you tell that the boy she loves and likes was to be at her side; and understand from you, more-over, where ye were all goin' to live, and what ye were all to do for a livin' when ye get there."

Stokesbury laughed again, but not heartily, nor with his usual expression, and said, "What absurdity! as for that lad, and Anny, why should I hinder their coming together? but as for the other question, I have already answered *you* by saying, I would never answer *it*, old fellow: it will be enough for you all to know that where-ever I go, or whatever I do, when for the

last time I leave my native country—and that too, in a few hours—I will not go where I have gone before, and I will not do what I have done before."

"The Lord be praised for them words, and keep ye in your own good resolution, Masther Harry, *a chorra*," exclaimed old Maurteen, tears starting from his eyes as he steadfastly and compassionately regarded him.

"What! you old fool," cried Stokesbury smiling gruffly, as their glances met, "and do you mean to make me think that I shall leave a single human being behind me, in Ireland, whose eye can moisten at a recollection of me, or of my fate or fortune?"

"I do, Masther Harry, I do!" answered Maurteen, standing up, impassioned—"and I tell you more than that; I tell you that you'll lave friends at home—here, near the ould house at the Inch—that will think of you, and have compassion for you, and

pray for a forgiveness for you, to their dying day—and I tell you that I'm one of them friends; will you shake my ould hand and let me hear from your lips that ye b'lieve what I say is the thruth?"

Instead of waiting to receive the hand that he had asked for, Maurteen suddenly took, and wrung it. Stokesbury, still seated, first stared at him; then, with a half-sneer, half-smile, turned away his face, and returned the old man's grasp.

"And, och, I'm only the last, and the laste worthy of them friends," continued Maurteen. "Come in, Miss Anny, come in! avoch! sure you're another of them, an' many steps higher than me, even if I were sated in my chair, on the top of Wind-gap itself! and come in, Miss Anny, wid the better friend than all, that's now at your side."

Maurteen spoke this close to the door; it was timidly, and slowly opened, and Harry Stokesbury saw his daughter

enter the room, supporting on her arm a tall, worn man, whose head and shoulders, drooped and bent prematurely forward, whose face was pale, and greatly agitated, and whose step was nervously unsure. He slowly arose; approached the weeping girl, and, in answer to her unexpected proffer, touched with his lips, in surprise, in deep feeling, and almost in confusion, her tearful cheek.

"And who is your friend, Anny?" he asked.

"*Your* cousin, father;" she answered, bursting into fresh tears: "Your cousin, Connor Kennedy."

He started back to a great distance, and yet, not in avoidance, or dislike, but evidently in utter amazment, and perhaps sympathy.

"What! that man, Connor Kennedy: that man, the Connor Kennedy, now only in the prime of life, as to years, who, when I saw him last, was so tall, and so straight, and so comely!"

"Yes, Masther Harry, that is the man:" said Maurteen Maher.

"Yes, Harry, I am the man, and the man too, that loved you then, as he loves you now, without a difference as to time, or chance, or accident: Harry Stokesbury, my dear cousin, forgive me, and take my hand."

"Forgive you, Connor! *I* forgive *you?*"

Stokesbury, quite thrown off his guard, seized the hands that were outstretched to him; these hands he felt gradually free themselves and glide along his arms, to his shoulders; and almost in spite of himself, at the moment, though not afterwards with regret, to his recollections, he once more embraced the cousin whom in early life he had loved.

A few words close our story. After some conversation, Stokesbury placed in Connor Kennedy's hands the legal documental proofs of his marriage in a foreign

country, with the mother of his daughter, Anny—together with a detail of the circumstances which caused their separation almost immediately after marriage, and her return to Europe; and Connor Kennedy explained the chances, and the means, by which he had become acquainted with the almost destitute state of the degraded lady, and had it in his power to succour her, and upon her death, adopt her orphan girl.

Anny was not present during this explanation.

"That girl," observed Stokesbury, suddenly, "will never become your son's wife, if she knows that she is the child of a really degraded father, so guard well from her some points of the history of my life, Connor; at least till they are married."

"All that you wish shall be done," replied Kennedy; "and though you cannot stay with us, shall we not hear from you, when you are settled abroad?"

"Do you really wish it?" asked Stokesbury.

"Oh, God knows; God knows I do," he replied, clasping his hands, and looking upwards with streaming eyes.

"You shall then," resumed the other, tightly grasping his arm — and Maurteen thought he observed the first glistening of moisture upon the lids of the outcast man.

Connor Kennedy did afterwards hear from Harry Stokesbury, and to his satisfaction.

That night, a coach-and-four was seen at a late hour to dash furiously away from the house at the Inch, by a peasant, who chanced upon some extreme case of necessity to be out of his bed, at the time; and this observer reported that the coach was black; that the horses were black; that the two very ill-favoured, grinning postilions, who shouted furiously, as they cracked their

wips, and made their horses gallop along, were also very nearly black; that the horses snorted fire, to say nothing of their pawing it up, out of the road! and that the wheels were encircled with ribbons of flame. And other things, related of this sudden and mysterious departure, left, after due consideration, upon the minds of the dwellers near the Inch house, that its "strange Man," had all along been connected with no creditable acquaintances, who, at last, had come to claim him, and lead him home. Some, indeed, objected to his having been waited upon with a carriage, remarking that "them kind of folk," need not have used any such means to make sure of his person; but the majority easily explained this away, by making the devil allow him a stylish turn-out at his exit from this world, in polite deference to the rank which he had held in it; and a few knowing ones, who would be original enough to differ from this judgment, suggested that

the carriage might have been driven up to the door of the house, in order to wheedle him into a seat in it, and then had whirled him off, against his will.

These charitable conclusions seemed afterwards corroborated by some awful occurrences. Just facing the celebrated house, at the opposite side of the river, stood a large granite rock, and nearly under its shadow dwelt the largest trout in the river; nearly all "sieve-makers," in Maurteen Maher's parlance; and after night-fall of a fine evening was the best time to take these esteemed denizens of the water:— well — a certain gigantic smith, Shaw Mulligan by name, and his son Pandye, were great frequenters of this popular angling station; and during the night of the suspicious journey of the strange Man, they had been fishing there as usual; when lo, of a sudden, Shawn was dragged up to the top of the rock, and from his convenient elevation, he saw, looking across the river, flashes of fire

ascend from the ground round the Inch house, and running, and capering through them, the figure of a man, who tossed his arms on high in a most fearful manner; and thenceforward, never did Shawn, or his son, or any one, on whom they had influence, venture near the granite-rock after nightfall.

But another person, who unfortunately had not heard this tale of terror, occupied the same spot, a few nights afterwards; and while in the very act of casting his line over a trout that rolled in the water, he said, like a "gear ould dog," he was suddenly seized by the skirts of his coat, and pulled backwards with a force that nearly dragged not only the skirts out of that coat, but the back bone out of his own body; all the while that the most devilish shouts and laughter were let loose into his ears; and, need it be added, that as soon as this ill-treated angler found himself free, he took to his heels; halted not till he had gained

unhaunted ground; and thence plodded the rest of his way homeward to warn all his neighbours against visiting the unholy place on the river's side; no matter though at the loss of the finest trout that ever swam in the said river.

These terrible accidents, coupled with the strange man's still more terrible departure from the house at the Inch, and indeed with the vicinity of the dreaded house itself, soon left the famous rock pretty generally unvisited. In fact only one individual continued to have the hardihood to resort to it during the stilly nights of summer; and great indeed was his courage, the neighbours thought;—for no one outwardly seemed more impressed than himself with the perils there to be encountered. For many a long year however, he turned to a good account his monopoly of this station;—and often, and often, as Gerald Kennedy and his wife strolled after night-fall along the banks of their beautiful stream, they were sure to

stop and have a chat, under the huge pile of granite, with Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Wind-gap.

END OF THE MAYOR OF WIND-GAP.

CANVASSING.

CANVASSING.

CHAPTER I.

LORD Glenville and Lord Warringdon were lounging together over a fashionable late breakfast.

"Recollect, Warringdon, you are to be with Cropper and Baines by four this morning, to hear about that girl."

"Time enough," replied Lord Warringdon, carelessly.

"You'll let her slip through your fingers, as you are going on; I see that very plainly."

"Probably," rejoined the son: "luckily, she is not the only heiress to be found in the city. Besides, to confess the truth, I am in no hurry, to run my neck into the noose, if I can help it."

"*If*," replied the father, significantly.

"I think that the heir to a hundred thousand a year, well paid, and but slightly encumbered, *might* help it," retorted the son.

"*I* think," observed the father, "that five thousand a year is a tolerably fair allowance for presents to opera people, and *douceurs* to ladies' maids."

"Not when ninety-five thousand is not found too much for the same purpose," retorted the son, with a sneer.

"Oh! as for that, Warringdon," replied Lord Glenville, affecting not to hear the foregoing remark; "you cannot have money in every way: you quite forget that your two last contested elections cost me fifty thousand pounds, besides having had

to pay back all the money you won on that cursed Twickenham party; and then, the rascally newspapers; recollect all it cost me to make them hold their tongues. I assure you, I had to pave your way out of that business with bank-bills. I often told you that one should never undertake a thing of the kind, unless one had nerve to go through with it. Better never win, unless you make up your mind to fight the man, if he objects to the fairness of the transaction. Don't you see, Warringdon?"

"For heaven's sake, spare me that irksome subject; we have already gone over the ground so often, that I know, by heart, all you would say. I have before assured you, that I shall never attempt recruiting my finances again in that way. With respect to the obligation you would fix on me, for arranging the affair, you must pardon my not seeing the business in the same light; had you honoured my draughts, I should not have been driven to such extre-

mities." And so saying, his lordship pushed his cup from him, and threw back his handsome head with an air of languid haughtiness.

His father glanced at him a moment, without speaking, and then, smiling coldly, observed, "*Raison de plus*, my good fellow, for looking after the heiress."

Their tête á tête was interrupted by the entrance of a footman with the morning papers, and a packet of notes and letters. A silence of some minutes ensued, which was broken by Lord Glenville.

"Who is that letter from, Warringdon?"

"Which; this?" answered his son; pointing to one he had just carelessly thrown aside, of which the delicate hue, exquisite odour, and lightly-traced and undefined characters, breathed womanly grace and frivolity,—"Oh, aye; this is from the prettiest woman in London. I am not going to make you my confessor, though."

"No," said Lord Glenville; "the other letter."

"That? Oh, that's from the next prettiest woman in London. I *did* think her *the* prettiest *dans le bon vieux temps*, a fortnight ago."

"No, no;" said his father, impatiently; "the letter you have there in your hand."

"Here it is for you;" answered Lord Warringdon, tossing it towards his father; "I have not read it myself, yet; but it will keep cool, I dare say."

"Ah, very good;" observed Lord Glenville, as he cast his eye over the epistle; "I wonder you did not tell me of this before, my dear Warringdon."

"How the deuce could I, when I had not read it? What's it all about?"

"It is from Wilmot."

"Who the devil is he?" enquired Lord Warringdon.

"Wilmot! Why, don't you recollect, you wrote to canvass him, the other day?

Wilmot, of Castle Wilmot, in the half-unreclaimed Irish county of ——; the husband of Lady Anne, Lord Rochford's daughter;—you recollect, don't you?"

"Oh, aye; I remember, now; what does he say?"

"I may as well read it for you," answered the father.

"Ah, no, tell it for me: I hate the reading, or hearing read, a stupid letter on business," replied the son.

"Well, he says that he will be most happy to give you his interest; he has I do not know how many thousand votes at your disposal; and is very glad that you look to a county in which your family have so large a stake, and so forth; and concludes by begging you to make his house your head-quarters:—very civil, is it not?"

"Yes," replied his son, yawning; "very great bore, though, to have to go there,—drink whisky-punch, and have my ears torn to pieces by their infernal brogue."

"Very true," remarked Lord Glenville; "you cannot, however, have the people's votes without taking a little trouble about them."

"If you would let me sit for one of your boroughs, though, I should be spared all this annoyance. Do you know, I have half a mind to pitch Wilmot, of Castle-Wilmot, and his cursed county, to the devil?"

"Do so, if you like, my good fellow; but how long do you expect to be out of the King's Bench after you have performed that feat? As for the boroughs, I have already told you, that I have sold them, for this time; I wanted money,—so there's an end of them till next parliament. You will walk over the course, in —— Wilmot says; —what more do you want than to *be* in parliament? but it is your affair, not mine. I wish, my dear Warringdon, you would condescend to listen to me, and play with your brute some other time."

Lord Warringdon had been, in fact,

amusing himself watching his superb St. Bernard's dog, tearing one of the billets, received that morning, into as many pieces as his noble master had done the feelings of its fair writer. "Ha, Monk, you rascal, you have been worrying the wrong letter; what a teaze! I did not half read it, either: so I don't know now, whether it is to-day, or to-morrow, that he takes himself off to his fair Terpsichore; leaving his *bella Tradita* to be cheered by his *fido Amico*. Capital, is it not, Monk, my boy? but if I should go the wrong day: what the devil, then? Why, it will be your fault, not mine; and that's some comfort, as times go. Jesting apart, however, it is a nuisance; I thought the fellow was tearing only my love's letter, and it turns out to be my *last* love's; a great bore, is it not?" asked this son of the nineteenth century, of his father.

"Warringdon, the subject upon which I am speaking to you is really a very serious one; and my advice, if you would please to

attend to it, might be of some importance to you."

The modern father did not think, it appears, that a love affair with a married woman was an event requiring his paternal interference. "But I cannot talk with you while you look so listless; do sit down, I beg of you, and favour me with a few moment's notice."

Lord Warringdon threw himself into a Bergère, and his father proceeded.—"A canvass among these hot-headed Irish needs some care, I assure you;—you must lay aside your apathy, your exclusiveness, your indifference, whether you offend or not, and for once in your life you must try to please."

"Must I?"—exclaimed his son, stretching out his finely-turned leg, and examining it with complacency.

The father did not notice the interruption and continued.—"Wilmot has the first interest in his county, and has represented

it before now; but he is at present under embarrassments, I hear;—a sad fellow, for getting through money, as all his compatriotes are;—over head and ears in debt, and obliged to play hide-and-seek occasionally with his creditors, but in Ireland, that's nothing, you know,—then his wife."—

"Have mercy on me," interrupted Lord Warringdon, "are you going to give me the man's pedigree and private history, as if I wanted to write his life."

"She has the name of being a great match-maker," continued Lord Glenville; "and when she was here some years ago, was very busy *in*"—

"What the deuce is all that to me?" asked Lord Warringdon.

"It is a great deal to you;—she has daughters."

"She might have a hundred, for any thing I care;" observed the young Viscount again yawning.

"One of them is very handsome," conti-

nued Lord Glenville, "and clever; now I would caution you."

"Against falling in love with her, is it?" interrupted the son, with a languid laugh. "No fear of that, I promise you—I hate clever women, you know, and make it a rule never to fall in love with any beauties but married ones."

"I know;—but take care, on the other hand, how you assume a prickly air, towards them; for that would not do either—you must admire the daughters' charms, or you will lose the father's votes."

"Never fear;—once in for the thing, I will go through with it properly—I will be dazzled with their brilliancy; captivated with their accomplishments;—and driven mad by their beauty.—Oh, these cursed accomplished beauties!—the brogue, and bad roads, are nothing in comparison. French, Italian and music, conchology, phrenology, and mineralogy;—with a dash of algebra, and animal magnetism, concluding with an

interlude of astronomy and mathematics. There's a bill of fare, enough to strike terror into any heart but that of an Electioneerer," and so saying, he arose, called his dog, hummed a Mazurka, and sauntered out of the room.

A few days afterwards he was in his travelling chariot, rolling off to Holyhead; we cannot better employ our time while he is on the road than by giving some idea of the family who are about to be honoured by his presence.

CHAPTER II.

MR. WILMOT, of Castle Wilmot, was what is termed, in Ireland, a capital fellow;—good-natured, careless, and extravagant. The owner of an estate, like most old Irish ones, a little the worse for the wear, and living away, like most such proprietors, as if the said estate was spick and span new;—in a word, just the man to be loved and robbed by an Irish tenantry and househol. He had been residing abroad for some years, and had just returned home to "retrnch" as he says, now that he is first introduced

to the reader. But alas! the claret, champagne and Burgundy, continue to be poured forth as liberally as if he were still in the land of vines. There was a second table in his establishment, as expensive as the first; nay, a third and a fourth, which, though less delicate in the quality of their aliments, made up the difference in the quantity consumed. An ox a week, and three sheep a day, was the minimum of provision disposed of in the kitchen, and servants'-hall; and all other things were on the same "grandee" scale of expenditure. His house was always thronged with guests; high and low, rich and poor; all had a "*cead mille faltha*" at Castle Wilmot. The consequences of such a system may be easily guessed. Lady Anne, unable to stop her husband's wild profusion, at last contented herself with turning it to some purpose, and as *he* would have his house filled with company, she took care there should be a fair proportion of marrying men, at a

certain ratio of fortune. By this means, she had already got three daughters off her hands; and she blessed her stars, and so did all who knew her, that she had but two remaining; for Lady Anne's reputation as a match-maker, had rendered her the terror of mothers who had sons, and the envy of those who had daughters.

No expense had been spared on the education of the Miss Wilmots. Mr. Wilmot's residence, whether in London or on the Continent, had, from their infancy, been besieged by Masters and by Mistresses; by teachers of music and teachers of languages. They had learned to dance from Coulon; to sing from Liverati; they spoke French like the *habituèes* of the Fauxbourg St. Germain; Italian like Romans. Maria, the eldest of the two remaining girls, being plain, was more especially exhorted by her mother to study "the accomplishments." And Maria had sense enough to follow the advice. She did study "the accomplishments" most assi-

duously, and successfully. But though she spoke all manner of tongues, and played all sorts of instruments; though she dressed like a French-woman; and flirted—like any woman,—some way or other, all these perfections had hitherto been exerted in vain; Maria was still unmarried. The men agreed that she sang and played like an angel; but that she looked like—what it would not be very civil to repeat; but, which, however, some very particular friend of Maria's *did* repeat; whereupon Lady Anne marked the delinquent in her black book, and vowed that she would make him repent before he died—that is to say, marry. Lady Anne, indeed, was the more indignant at the observation, because she felt there was some truth in it. Having, through her own family, an excellent introduction for her daughters, into the best English set, she had once hoped that Maria, although plain, might, perhaps, have been fashionable; but there, again, she was baffled. Maria, though she

had the two essential requisites for fashion, that is to say, intrepidity and hardiness, was considered by her *exclusive* acquaintance, as much too vivacious, ever to become perfectly high bred. Unfortunately for her, she possessed much of the humour of her country; and had, more than once, not only actually laughed herself, but had caused others to perpetrate a similar enormity. She was, in consequence, set down as "sadly Irish," in other words, extreme *mauvais ton;* if not positively vulgar, something closely approximating to it. Maria, it appears, was not aware that although an Englishman. of a certain *caste*, may perchance be induced to enjoy a jest, he never fails to pretend to undervalue the jester, whether the said jester be an amateur, or a buffoon by profession; that, conscious how much trouble a witty saying would cost himself, he imagines the gaiety of his lively neighbours to be as great an effort to them as to him; and that, therefore, when they

laugh, or are brilliant, in his presence; all *that* is done by self-admitted inferiors, to please a superior. So poor Maria was accused of being very Irish.

"Next to saying I picked a bone," said she to her mother, as they chatted over a criticism reported to have been made upon her, the evening before, "or, that I eat with my knife, they could not, according to their code of manners, say a worse thing of me; stupid, prosing set! I will let them see, if we come to the push, that they will have the worst of it. They don't yet know a tithe of what is in me; they imagine, because I do not talk as if I were half asleep, that it is because I cannot talk. To-morrow evening, at my uncle's, I will look, and move, and speak, so like the Lady Vapids, that not one in the room but will confess I could be as 'nice a person,' and as tiresome, as the best among them."

The powers of mimicry which Maria had hitherto restrained, she fully displayed at

her uncle's, on the night of which she had spoken—allowing her fastidious censors to see what was in store for them, if they did not leave her and her Irishism unmolested.

"So, you imagine," said she to one of her critics, "that we laugh to divert you; and that, therefore, you must be gods to us. You are mistaken, my good lord, we do not laugh to amuse you, but to amuse ourselves; we laugh because we like it; because we can't help it, in fact. What would the philosopher of old, who defined man to be a laughing animal, say to you English?—you high English, I mean? Why he would say you were '*sadly* English.' I have philosophy, you see, as well as nature, on my side; so pray *do* let me laugh, and allow yourselves to laugh along with me."

Maria, thanks to her courage, kept her ground, among her fashionable associates; and she became, at last, not so much vulgar, as odd; but Maria knew that men of fashion have as great an objection to odd

girls, as to vulgar ones. "I see, plainly," said she, "that I shall never be able to marry among them: but some fool or other, with money, who is out of the set, will think it a fine thing to take me, because I am in it; that is all I can expect, after all my *battling* for a place among them. Isabel, you have a better chance than I have, you are so much more quiet."

Maria was right. Her sister Isabel possessed a natural timidity which made her more fitted for the impress for English mannerism. Though not called beautiful, few could see her without feeling her to be so. Her acquirements did not bear quite so professional a stamp as those of her sister, but there was more taste evinced in the manifestion of them. Her conversation was quiet, but interesting — animated, without being positively gay; grateful, and slightly dashed with romance. Indeed, she was altogether better suited than her sister to have succeeded among the "high English." But then, Isabel Wilmot had no money; and beauty, and

elegance, and accomplishments are such drugs in London! Besides, she had some strange and peculiar ways of thinking, which checked her success in life. She never could be induced to imitate her sister's "Bold strokes for a Husband;" and would even venture to remonstrate with her on such open love-making to the men.

"My dear, do not talk nonsense," her mother would say; "your sister must do as others do—as all your acquaintances either have done, are doing, or will do. Men will not make love, now-a-days; they must, therefore, be made love to;—one of your curls is out of place, my love."

And here Maria would chime in—"You are so ridiculous, Isabel—wanting to play the violet, forsooth; modest and retired, waiting to be sought for; prettily indifferent whether a hand come to cull you or not; but this might have been very right a century ago, my good child;—when the men would woo, it was perhaps right that women

should wait to be wooed; but "*autres temps, autres mœurs, ma belle,*"—you violet young ladies may now remain till you wither, before any one comes to pluck you;—the men of the present day expect *us* to court *them.*"

"Truly! a fitting expectation," Isabel would rejoin: 'so while they repose in their dignity, like the Eastern gentleman on his couch, we are to play the part of Bayaderes, and after we have danced and sung like Terpischores and Syrens; after we have exhausted all our little wiles and graces, to charm their apathy, we are to think ourselves repaid, if we win a smile in return, from their high mightinesses. That I will never do—never'"—she would add, earnestly.

"Don't be so emphatic about nothing at all, my dear, 'tis extreme '*mauvais ton,*'" her mother would answer. "You need not marry at all, you know, if you don't choose it; but all I wish to observe is, that if you *do* intend marrying, and marrying in a certain rank, you must not expect the men to look after *you.*"

Now, Lady Anne had brought up her daughters to consider a single life as any thing rather than a life of "blessedness;" but though Isabel shivered at the thought of being an old maid, she also shrunk at the idea of running after the men, though daily exhorted to it by her dear mama's precepts, and her sister's example. She was too worldly-minded to be perfectly high-minded; and too high-minded to be perfectly worldly; so she halted between two sets of feelings and opinions;—a marrying girl—and yet a dignified one. She had both a head and a heart, and yet she aimed to establish herself among "the certain set," who, as it is proverbially said, do not care or pretend to either. She felt chilled by their coldness, taught by their hollowness, wearied by their apathy; but then, rank, fashion, fortune, floated as a bright vision before her eyes; and, like many other girls, she thought it possible, some day or other, to reconcile her ambition with her affections. In fact,

she was incapable of sacrificing her feelings to her interests; but she determined never to indulge the one at the expense of the other. While in this state of vacillation, her father was obliged, in consequence of having been robbed by his local agents, to return with his family from London to Ireland, where they had been remaining now nearly two years in a solitude (comparatively speaking), very little to the taste of either of the sisters. Isabel would not listen to the soft speeches of any of her country neighbours, or haply she might have heard "something to her advantage." Amongst others, a certain Mr. Mc Alpine was deeply smitten with her;—of him more anon. But though the gentlemen thought her very handsome, they also thought she gave herself rather too many airs; as for the ladies, they of course abominated her; for it is allowed to a woman, by women, to be either pretty or clever,; but, to be both together

is unpardonable; and they, therefore, liked Maria better than Isabel, because the men did not.

Still, "though devilish ugly," according to the phraseology of her Irish male friends, Maria Wilmot was a "devilish" pleasant, off-hand girl; no London airs, like the beauty; no stuff and nonsense about her, but the truth of a good-humoured, rattling girl, "who said every thing that came uppermost."

Dear gentlemen! you were never more mistaken in your lives. Maria Wilmot, with all her apparent *abandon,* never said any thing for which she had not a motive. You imagined that one who incessantly talked and laughed could "have had no harm in her"—that is to say, no design upon you; and all the ill-natured things she said of her fellow-women, and all the forward ones she said to yourselves, were, therefore, set down by you to mere spirits and giddiness.

Maria, in truth, scarce ever lost presence of mind. She was cased in armour of brass, nothing touched or disconcerted her; and surely, if possession be eleven points in the law of the land, impudence is eleven points in the game of life; indeed, it is a gift as valuable as talent in man, or as beauty in woman, for it makes its possessor independent of either. We have enlarged somewhat on this point of Maria's indiosyncracy, inasmuch as without perfect knowledge of her distinguishing characteristic, the reader might be unable fully to comprehend her future proceedings.

CHAPTER III.

ON, or about the day that Lord Warringdon left London on his way to Wilmot castle, Lady Anne and her daughters were sitting in the breakfast-room of the afore-named edifice, reading, and occasionally amusing themselves by watching the rain, which poured in torrents outside the windows and even penetrated a little on their inside. Wilmot castle, originally a shooting-lodge, had only recently become (for certain cogent reasons which we do not choose to mention, but which the sheriff of its county town

could guess at,) the family residence. Towers of various heights and forms, and of different orders of architecture, classic, gothic, and oriental, according to the suggestion of each successive adviser of the family, were heaped together with the coolest disregard of the suitable, the convenient, or even of the comfortable.

"What a day!" exclaimed Maria, yawning—"I wonder will my papa bring in any people from the assizes?"

"I'm sure," observed Isabel, "it is as well to be without any, as to have such creatures as he is likely to bring."

"My dear, I make it a rule," returned Maria, "to be satisfied, wherever I am, with the best the country produces, whether as regards eatables, wearables, or *flirtables.* You can't gather 'grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles:' and because I can't get pine-apples, I will not sit down and starve, if there are plenty even of good potatoes within my reach."

"That's what I call sound philosophy, Maria."

"Excellent! for its sound sense," agreed Lady Anne, looking off her book for a moment, to commend her elder daughter's rationality.

"I assure you, Isabel," continued Maria, "if it were only to keep your hand *in*, you would do well to flirt a little now and then, with whatever God sends: 'why don't you take pattern by Miss Maria?' as old nurse says, 'you see what elegant divarsion she makes for herself, not all as one, as Miss Isabel.'"

"That's all very well for nurse to say, but—"

"But," interrupted Maria, laughing, "not very well for me to do; is that it, sentimental Isabel? For my part, I think flirting not only an agreeable, but a very salutary, pastime. A good flirting bout adds at least, ten years to *my* life. I re-

member when you were a pretty good hand at it, yourself, Isabel."

"So do I, too," replied Isabel smiling, "but not with such men as you are talking about—I could not flirt with a man I did not like."

"I could, then; aye, and not only flirt with him, but—marry him."

"Well!" replied Isabel, "I can much better understand a woman's marrying a man she dislikes, than flirting with one she dislikes."

"Upon what principle?" asked Maria.

"Upon the principle that a man might with great calmness suffer a rope to be placed round his neck, although he will hardly laugh, and jest, and bandy witty sayings with the hangman."

"Bravo, bravo!" exclaimed Maria, laughing, "a husband compared to a hangman! *c'est unique ma, chére*—but there's Paudeen, I vow! and I dare say he brings a letter from my father."

And she started off to the hall-door to watch Paudeen, puffing and blowing, as he ascended the hill leading to the Castle. Little Paudeen was one of the *corps de reserve* composed of errand boys, and idling boys, who seemed just born into the world for no other purpose then to supply, by their little bare legs, the occasional lapses of memory of the Castle Wilmot household.

"Murdher! we forgot to send for the salt! The beef will be spoilt intirely, for want of the salt! Where in the world is Paudeen? Till I'd make him step across the mountain for the salt."

But Paudeen would have been despatched the night before "for the tay, that was forgot to be sint for, the same time as the sugar." And one of Paudeen's compeers would be packed off for the salt. And so, Paudeen was now returning, after performing some confidential mission of this nature, from the assize town.

"How are you, Paudeen?" said Maria, finely.

"I thank your honour, Miss:" replied Paudeen, pulling out a lock of his hair, in his eagerness to make his best bow. He would have pulled off his hat if he had had one.

"Well, Paudeen, did you see the master?"—

"I did, plaze your honour:" replied the hatless, shoeless page of Castle Wilmot.

"And when is he coming?" continued Maria.

"The day after to-morrow, he will be here, Miss:" rejoined Paudeen.

"And do you know what prevented his coming yesterday?"

"Waiting for the gintleman, I b'lieve, Miss."

"What gentleman?" asked Maria, briskly.

"The gintleman from England, Miss."

"What has a gentleman from England

to do with the master's coming home, Paudeen ?"

"Sure it has every thing to do with it, wherin the gintleman is coming along with himself—came all the ways from England, a purpose to ax the masther's lave to be made a mimber of, Miss."

"Can it be Lord Warringdon, I wonder?" said Maria, thinking aloud.

"That's the name, Miss—you have it, and you got the Masther's letter, didn't you, Miss, where he tould you all about it?"

"No," answered Maria, "we got no letter."

"Faith, and he sent it, Miss, for all that, by a brother of Pat Murphy's; but 'tis my opinion, Miss, he got drunk and lost the letter; 'case you know, Miss, he loves a dhrop. So, Miss, you didn't get the bad places on the road mended, nor any thing ready, Miss? To be sure what a villian he is! the masther will be mad, and no blame to him!"

Maria returned hastily to the apartment where she had left her mother and sister. "Good people," said she, "I am the bearer of important tidings—our solitude is about to be broken in upon by no less a personage than Viscount Warringdon."

"Nonsense, Maria!" exclaimed her sister.

"Truth, Isabel."

"Who says so?" demanded Lady Anne.

"I have it on indisputable authority—that of Paudeen, who has just returned from the scene of action—where he left my father awaiting the noble Viscount's arrival."

"Very extraordinary that your father should not have mentioned this sooner!" replied Lady Anne.

"It appears that he has, in a letter, but that the letter has been lost."

"I am afraid there is not a single thing in the house fit for the reception of such a person as Lord Warringdon—do ring the bell, I must only do the best I can."

Pat Murphy answered the summons, and a few minutes afterwards his voice was heard in the servants' hall, calling out in a hasty manner, "send up Jim Flanagan to my lady."

"What for?" asked Mrs. Mc Donogh.

"Never you mind;" was the surly rejoinder.

"Never you mind, to me! you baste! How dare you say never mind, to me?"

"I say it agin, then," rejoined Pat, "and I'd say it to the King of England, or the Pope, if he was in it, or the masther himself, when such conthrary things happen."

"Oh then I'll tell you one thing, my man; and mind what I say, don't be shewing your ill-manners to your masther's nurse, whomsoever you may be impident too, for that would be a worse day for you than ever your worst inemy wished to you."

Pat seemed to suspect as much, for he made no answer to this denunciation, but

turned round on the crowd who stood gaping and listening to the dialogue.

"Why the devil don't ye send up Jim when I bid you?"

"And how the divil could we, when he isn't in it?"

"Tunder and ages! then, where is he?"—

"Gone home to be sure, where else would he be?"

"The curse o' Cromwell on him!" piously exclaimed Pat. "I never knew him betther than to be always *in* the way, or always *out* of it—Meehelleen, where are *you?*"

"Here!" exclaimed a little sharp voice.

"Meehelleen, *Ma vourneen*, you must go by the first light in the morning for Jim, and bid him come here if he's alive, by eight o'clock afore breakfast; or, wait! may be 'tis as well at once to tell him what he is wanting for; 'twill save time; so bid him take a couple o' score of min to

the road, to mend the bad places—do you mind?"

"I do:" replied Meehelleen half asleep.

"Bad luck to them scoundrels on the grand jury, that's always traversing the masther's presintments," charitably observed one of the *attachés* of the kitchen.

"You are a fool for that wish," responded Pat—"may be if the roads were betther we'd have some company thravelling on them that mightn't be so convanient."

"A then, Pat," said a rosy-faced laundry maid, suspected of possessing more influence over Pat's surly humour than he cared to acknowledge—"A then, tell us, an' God bless you, who's expicted?"

"The devil and his mother!" was the lover-like answer.

"The Lord save us! don't bite our heads off, any how. The cat may look at the king—any one may ax a question, I hope."

"Well then, indeed, Peggy," remarked Mrs. Mc Donogh—"I think you might as

well wait till your betthers were sarved, before you put your spoon in the dish; more especially when the discoorse is of family concarns; and when *I can't* get an answer, 'tis not the likes of you that will; but, indeed, I desarve no betther, when I demane myself to join such company."

In hopes, however, that Pat would, sooner or later, make the *amende honorable*, and communicate the desired information, Mrs. Mc Donogh retained her seat, and suspended her dignity for a season.

Indeed, like many other people of importance, she found grandeur a troublesome every-day appendage, and was not sorry to exchange, sometimes, the stiffness of housekeeper-room etiquette for the more sociable conversation of the servants' hall.

A few moment's reflection had convinced Pat of the impropriety of answering so important a personage as Mrs. Mc Donogh with the disrepect of which he had been guilty; and, after two or three muttered

curses on the absent Jim Flanagan, he re-addressed the good lady thus:

"Well, ma'am; if I said any thing out of the way, I ax your pardon: you know, yourself, I wouldn't be the one to displase the masther's dog, let alone his nurse. Sure, if I didn't love him, and all belonging to him, as I do, and if I wouldn't go to the hottest place in the other world for them, I needn't mind who comes or who laves the house. There's Tom Sassenach, for you, who's always as mild as a girl the day of her wedding. He takes the world asy. The masther saved him from being thransported, in London, and, for all that, he wouldn't help us to bate the process-server, because, indeed, he might take the law of him, for an assault upon the king's highway. God help his poor bothered English head, 'tisn't on the king's highway, at all, man,' says I, for 'twas up a' *Boreen* we caught the fellow, Mrs. Mc Donough, but a devil a one of Tom would lift a stick;

and I'm not all's one as that mane-spirited cratur. I'd lose the last dhrop of my blood for the masther; and, you know, ma'am, that many's the time I have done what one sthroke more would have made murder of, to keep off them blood-thirsty-Orangemen of process-servers."

Pat's audience, much as they desired this exordium shortened, did not venture on imitating the means resorted to by impatient members of the Lower House, when they wish to curtail long-winded *exposés*. Pat was neither *questioned* nor *coughed down*, but suffered to say his say.—The Irish are naturally a courteous people. When it was evident he had finished, and not till then, a buzz of approbation, and of approbation only, met his ear. "True, for you, Pat, there never lived a better sarvant to a good masther, than yourself,—divil a better."

Now, in the Irish vocabulary, a good servant does not always mean the same as in the English one. In fact, a good servant, on

the other side of the water, sometimes signifies an individual who may be troublesome, drunken, and negligent, even disrespectful, but who would stand up for his master's dignity, and defend his person at the peril of his own neck; very useful qualifications, it may be added, in a country, where, now and then, its gentry owe their personal liberty to their inaccessible roads and a devoted tenantry.

"At the same time," continued Pat, "that I would lay down my life for the masther, and why wouldn't I? He saved my father, in the rebellion, from dying, as none of his name ever did before him, or will afther him, if it wouldn't be myself, that might give one of the lads, with papers, a taste more of the stick than he could convaniently carry. But for all that, and well as I love him, by the powers! he sometimes makes me mad with him. Nothing must do him, but to write to ax that lord from

England, that's coming to canvass the county."

Many and various were the exclamations that now rose in every variety of Irish intonation, from servants' hall and kitchen.

"Blessed Virgin, purtect us!" exclaimed Mrs. Mc Donough, "sure it's joking you are, Pat? a gintleman from England!"

"Bad cess to them villains of turkeys," cried the cook; "there isn't one of them fit to kill! I have been breaking my heart, this fortnight past, sthriving to fatten 'em, and can't, God help me!"

"Devil a thing to ate or dhrink in the house, this blessed night!" groaned the groom. I never knew the aqual of the masther, for doin' things hand over head, without so much as telling one before he does 'em."

"That he may brake his neck, I pray God, for all the throuble he is giving us," piously aspirated the housemaid, meaning

the expected stranger, however, not her master.

"What matter, whether he does or not?" interrupted the coachman; "one would think, to hear ye all going on, there never was seen a jintleman in the house afore; what's good enough for the quality of the counthry is good enough for him, I suppose."

"Don't bother us," said Pat; "We know that as well as you can tell us. 'Tisn't that he's better than other quality, but that he's more impudent. Them English is so d——d concated, passing their remarks on Ireland, and making their skit of all they seen, when they go back again."

"Is he young or ould, Pat," enquired the laundry-maid, making a second attempt to extract information from her uncommunicative admirer.

"What the devil does it signify, whether he is, or no?"

"'Tis you that's in the sweet timper to-night, sure enough," retorted his mistress. "It does, then, signify every thing, whether a gintleman coming to the house is young or ould; if he's a young, rich gintleman, who knows what good may be in sthore for one of the young ladies?"

"Oh, then, if he's any good at all, down on my binded knees this night, I pray the saints in heaven, one of the young ladies may get him. How proud I'd be, if he was to purpose for Miss Maria! she's such a darling, hearty, pleasant cratur. I wonder which of 'em it will be?"

"You may spare yourself the throuble of wondhering about it, for he'll take neither of 'em, I can tell you," said Pat. "That's the way with them English always; they'll ate you out of house and home, and then walk off with thimselves, fair and asy. But it's Miss Isabel he'd take, if he took either: she's such a darling, purty young lady."

Here a violent ringing of the parlour bell interrupted the colloquy.

"Hubbaboo!" exclaimed Pat; "I forgot, intirely, to tell ye, my lady wants Winny directly;—skelp off this minute, like a lamp-lighter."

Winny was not very slow in obeying the summons, in hopes of learning all the particulars concerning the alarming visit.

"Winny, my good girl," said Lady Anne, "you must get the best room ready against the day after to-morrow, for a gentleman the master has asked here."

"Ah, then, mee Lady, sure it isn't here he'll sleep."

"Why, Winny, where can he sleep but here?"

"Faicks, mee Lady, there's no sheets to put on the bed."

"No sheets! how do you mean?"

"The masther, mee Lady, that ordered widow Fahy's cow into the shrubbery, beyant, and myself didn't know the conthrari-

ness of her, becase, mee lady, she's only a short time in the place, — widow Fahy bought her of a man in the lower parish, so I left themselves and herself together, mee lady."

"You left what together?" said Lady Anne. "I don't understand what you're talking about."

"The sheets and the cow, mee Lady."

"Oh, very well, go on," said Lady Anne.

"Well, mee lady, I wint in to my dinner not thinking any harim would happen my sheets, or I would have made my little sister stop with them; and when I come back, to look to see were they dhry, sorrow of a tatther of a sheet did I see, but a rag sticking out of her mouth."

"Out of your sister's mouth?" asked Lady Anne, who, not having been Irish bred and born, was seldom able to follow the entanglements of an Irish sentence.

"Not at all, mee lady; my little sisther wasn't in it, more is the pity. No! but sticking out of the cow's mouth it was; mee lady, the sight left my eyes when I seen it, and a wakeness came over me at the start I got."

"The upshot of it is," said Maria, "the cow has eaten the sheets; isn't that it, Winney?"

"It is, Miss: but, sure it isn't the sheets, itself, that's the worst of it. We could borry a pair of sheets from Mrs. Molony, who's always a good warrant to lend, only for the curtains being spoilt, too."

"What! did the cow eat the curtains, too?"

"No, mee Lady, but Father John's brother!"

"Eat *them?*" exclaimed Lady Anne.

"No, mee lady, tore 'em."

"How could he tear them?"

"Father John's brother, mee lady, that was at a wedding, Saturday was a week,

and he come here becase 'twas late for himself and his baste to be crossing the bogs."

"What has this to do with the curtains being torn?" interrupted Lady Anne.

"Sure, my lady, it has every thing to do with it, seeing he was pleasant at the same time."

"What does she mean to say?" asked Lady Anne, turning to Maria, who was enjoying the dialogue between the Irish servant and English mistress, and thought it much too pretty a one to be inclined to spoil it by a little explanation.

"I wish, Maria, you would not stand laughing there, but help me to understand this girl. "What on earth a man's being pleasant can have to do with tearing curtains, I can't imagine."

"But sure, I mane he was not himself, you know."

Lady Anne still looked puzzled.

"He tuk a sup, I mane; you under

stand, don't you, Miss?" continued Winny, curtsying to Maria.

"To be sure I do, Winny; do you think I was born in Ireland for nothing?"

Maria was particularly anxious to stand well with the lower order, and have their good word; besides, she was, indeed, constitutionally good humoured, and never ill-natured, except when it was her interest to be so.

"Ah," thought Winny, "Miss Maria has more sinse in her little finger, than my lady in her whole carcase. Well, Miss, to make a long story short, right or wrong, he wanted more liquor, and troth we were afeared to give him any more. He axed the masther then, himself, and when the masther wouldn't give it to him either, he went mad intirely. Then the masther come down to see who it was was making sich a noise in the house, and when he seen who it was, he bid Pat Murphy and Paudeen carry him up to bed, and when he wasn't plazed with the recep-

tion he got, sure he tore the curtains in ribbons, and broke the bed, and destroyed the room intirely, Miss. I never seen him so pleasant, as he was that same night."

"Yes, but, Winny, that has nothing to do with the best room, you know:" observed Maria.

"Avoch, Miss, sure its of the best room I am talking. Sure its the best room he ruint this ways: sorrow may care what capers he cut any where else but there, sure that what's killing me, Miss;" continued Winny, dolefully.

"And pray," interrupted Lady Anne, in displeasure, "what possessed you to put a drunken man into the best room?"

"God sees and knows, it wasn't my fault, mee lady, but the masther's, that tould me take care, for my life, would I put him where your honour's ladyship could hear him bawlling, and roaring, and going on, for fear you wouldn't be plazed with the noise he was making, mee lady; and I had no

place to put him in out of the way, but the best room. Myself, and Paudeen, and Pat Murphy, and all the other girls in the house, mee lady, were striving an hour and more by the clock, to get him up the garrot stairs, but it failed us; he kept kicking, and prancing, and biting like mad—sich other going on, I never seen, for all I'm used to men in liquor. So I went to tell the masther it failed us to get him up the garret stair —an' the masther, he bid me put him in the best room. 'Faith, sir,' says I 'I'm afeard my lady will be mad.' 'No she won't,' said he, 'do as I bid you.' Troth, my lady, I'd be very sorry to do it at any other bidding but his own."

Just at this moment a doleful exclamation from the group that had gathered round the half-opened door, attracted Maria's attention.

"Arah, Pat dear! How will this be at all? My lady will go mad intirely, and no blame to her, in regard of the spoons."

"What spoons?" asked Maria.

"The spoons of the house, Miss, that Barney Sullivan took the loan of, without lave."

"Stole, I suppose you mean," observed Maria.

"Troth, and I b'live that's only another way of saying the same thing. He borry'd them as though for his sisther's wedding—you know the one that married a son of Mark Flanagan's, a sort of a half gentleman, that must be made much of, so the masther bid me give 'em them, and when I tould the masther I could not get them of him again, if I didn't bate him, he told me not, and that he would see about him himself; but he went to the 'sizes sure, and he forgot 'em."

"And why did you not tell me, Pat, that the things in your charge were missing?"—

"A sure, my lady, didn't the masther threaten he'd banish me the place, if I let

on to your ladyship about it? Faith, I'd be very sorry to be decaving you my lady, in regard of a blackguard of his kind. Barney Sullivan is no such great frind of mine, as that I'd be telling lies to screen him from his desarvings."

"Was ever any thing like this!" exclaimed Isabel, for the first time taking a part in the conversation—she had hitherto sat silent and provoked.

"Yes," answered Maria, "there have been fifty things just like it—one would imagine you were still in Grovesnor Square, where there are no cows to eat sheets, nor Barney Sullivans to steal spoons."

"We shall be disgraced, I see clearly:" said lady Anne, in a desponding tone. "Even with the best appointed establishment, we should hardly escape the criticism of a young English gentleman of fashion: but such a castle Rack-Rent as this, would make us the ridicule of any one —and he is to be here the day after to-

morrow! I really do not know which way to turn."

"We had better give out we have got the typhus fever in the house, and that we must relinquish the pleasure of his company;" said Maria—"but come, mamma, let you and Isabel take yourselves off, and I will overlook the domestic economy and settle it all capitally, you shall see.

After the door had closed on them, Maria began a review of the cellar. "The champagne is gone long ago I know, but there's some madeira, and—"

"Madeira! Miss Maria, sorrow a dhrop in the place as mush as would blind your eye: the last dozen was drank the day before the masther left home:" replied Pat.

"Bad enough;" remarked Maria, "still we have the Burgundy, you know."

"Ah, then where, Miss?" enquired Pat.

"In the cellar I suppose:" answered Maria.

"Faicks and you have not, Miss, Mr. O'Higgerty got the last of it, when he gaye the grand dinner to the army, last week."

"Hermitage, Frontignac, Hock, Vin de Grave, are none of them forthcoming?"

"No!"

"What does remain then?"

"Faith, Miss, it won't take long to say that—only a dozen of port, and half-a-dozen of sherry!" and such was the comfortable announcement of the state of the cellar.

"And what's to be done about the dinner, Miss?" enquired the terrified cook. Me, that has neither duck, nor chicken, nor turkey fit to kill. I never seen such schamers of poulthry! the world wouldn't fatten 'em —just as if they done it a purpose, out of contrariness. May our blessed mother look down upon me this night, in my thruble!"

Maria's courage began to ooze out, but, however, she put a good face on the matter, and after a little consultation and

recollection, the affair was arranged more creditably for the Wilmot pride than could at one time have been expected. Borrowing parties were sent out, in all directions, to repair the various wants and losses already enumerated, and, by the eventful day, Maria had the satisfaction of seeing that every thing was tolerably right and proper. Lady Anne resumed her bland smiles, and Isabel began to breathe freely once more; and in this pleasing state of mind we will leave them, and return to our friend Lord Warringdon, who has just arrived at, ——— and early in the morning is preparing to start for Wilmot Castle accompanied by Mr. Wilmot himself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE road to Wilmot Castle, never very good, was now, owing to the late rains, nearly impassable; and Mr. Wilmot, although he had issued strict orders to "little Paudeen" to bid Pat Murphy tell Jim Flanagan to give "a touch of mending" to the bad places, entertained certain misgivings as to the manner in which the said orders would be executed by the said Jim Flanagan; even should the said Paudeen not have forgotten to tell the said Pat Murphy to tell the said Jim.

"I am devilishly afraid, Kelly," he said to his man, as he was stepping into bed, the evening before they were to start; "that Lord Warrington's nice, London-built carriage will break down on the road to Wilmot castle."

"Faith, sir, I wouldn't be surprised if it did."

"Had I not better tell him to leave it here, then? Costella will take care of it;—what do you think, Kelly?"

"Faith, sir, if you take my advice, you will say nothing about it, but leave it all to God. May be, it won't break down at all, sir; and if it does, we must only pretend to be greatly surprised on account of how bad the road is grown; or, suppose we lay the blame on the dhriver; that will do betther. Jim is to dhrive us (he is a tinant of your own, sir, from the other side o' the county); and he won't mind, a ha'parth, getting the blame instead of your road, sir; and we can make it up to him some other way, sir;

it would sound so quare, sir, to be telling a sthrange gentleman, just come to the counthry, that one hasn't a road fit for him to thravel on, sir."

"By Jove, Kelly, I believe you are right," replied the master; "no use exposing the nakedness of the land, if we can help it; and, as you say, may be, we shan't break down; and, if we do, you can give Jim half a guinea to take the blame on himself, poor devil!"

So Mr. Wilmot did not apprise his noble guest of the more than probable doom of his highly-finished, London-built carriage.

"Where is the post-boy?" asked Lord Warringdon, of a tatterdemalion figure near him.

"Is it the dhriver you are axin' about, sir,—my lord, I mane?" also asked, instead of answering (for he *was* Irish) the person addressed; and he respectfully took off a hat that had, we suppose, once been good and shaped like other hats, but that now

bore evidence of hard service;—"an', sure, I'm the boy you want, my lord."

His lordship showed some surprise at this piece of information; but Jim, though interpreting the surprise to be created by his own un-post-boy like appearance, affected to take it quite the other way.

"Faith! it's mysel', and nobody else, that's to be your dhriver, my lord; did ye think, sir,—my lord, I mane,—that my masther, Misther Costelloe, would put you off wid any one but mysel'? Faith, my lord, he would be very sorry to do such a thing as that; 'tis me that always dhrives the lords and mimbers of parliament; for Misther Costelloe wouldn't let me dhrive any of the commonalty, at all, good or bad, but keeps me for the grand quality intirely, such as your lordship's honour, or Mr. Wilmot; yes, indeed, I'm his grandee dhriver, my lord." And Jim closed his harangue by giving a chuck to his femoral habiliments and a knowing look at Mike Kelly.

"So, then," said Lord Warringdon, laughing, aye, English and exclusive as he was, actually laughing at the singularly unaristocratic appearance of the 'grandee dhriver.' "So, then, I am to consider it quite a compliment to have you for a coachman?"

"Oh! not to say intirely a compliment, my lord," repied Jim, twirling between finger and thumb the before-mentioned hat, and smiling and looking modest.

"Not entirely?" asked Lord Warringdon; "only almost, Jim, is that it?"

"I b'lieve this is the way it is;—a grand gintleman, like you, my lord, would not like, may be, to be behoulden to the likes of me, for a compliment; so your honour's lordship can make me any compliment you 'plaise, when we're parting, by and bye."

"Very well," answered Lord Warringdon, still amused at Jim's way of arranging the punctilio of obligation,—"you pay me the compliment of driving me, and I

pay you a compliment of another kind, equal in value."

"Long life to your lordship's honour," cried Jim; "that's it, exactly;" and off he walked to "give a touch" to the harness.

"Jim, are those horses good?" enquired his lordship.

"Is it *my* bastes your honour's asking about? to be sure they are; don't you see 'em, my Lord?" assuming a look of extreme surprise.

"I *do* see them, Jim," replied the English lord, laughing with all the *bonhommie* of a candidate for the "sweet voices" of an Irish county; "and because I see they don't look good, I want to know from you if they really are."

"Looks are decaiteful, my lord, sometimes; them, now, are quality bastes, for all they don't seem so; the raal quality I mane, that has no concate about 'em, like your honour, for all the world; barring they don't look so like quality-bastes as

your honour's lordship does like a quality gintleman. But 'tisn't every one, you know, my lord, that has the chance to be born grand and iligant, and clever-looking," glancing, with a smile half shy, half servile, at the really distinguished figure of Lord Warringdon.

Now, although the noble Viscount had read in so many bright eyes, and had even heard from so many beautiful lips, that he was one of the most *distingué* men that the owners of the said eyes and lips had ever seen, he was not so *blasé*, with respect to compliments on his personal appearance, as to hear with unconcern the impression he had made upon a ragged Irish post-boy; so he enquired no more into the merits of Jem's "bastes," but, still laughing, jumped into the carriage.

"Curious people, these Irish fellows," he observed to Mr. Wilmot, who was already seated, "how well the rogue turned off my enquiries about his horses! you could

furnish all Europe with diplomatists as well as soldiers."

"Very right; we are, indeed, a most devilishly troublesome set of fellows; a nation of soldiers and cabinet ministers *en brut*, but not so difficult to manage, after all, if any one would take the trouble of trying; talk and laugh with our lower orders, and you win them at once; and, since you start on this plan, I predict that your lordship will make a successful canvass; you have already, I see, made a conquest of Jim," he added, smiling: "but what are we waiting for? Kelly! bid him drive on, and pretty fast, too, or we shall be late on the road; recollect we have five-and-thirty miles to go; you will excuse my taking the master on me," said he, turning to his companion; "for the miles are Irish ones, too."

"Take care, for your life, would you dhrive fast, Jim," said Kelly, as he mounted one of his master's horses, the other having

been given to Lord Warringdon's gentleman-in-waiting — "Never mind what the masther says, Jim; dhrive asy, and God bless you, or you'll smash us to atoms."

"A-thin, Mr. Kelly, one would think, to hear you, you thought you were spaking to an ignoramus; sure it isn't the first time I wint his honour's roads, nor won't be the last, either, plase God! Troth, I've a right to know 'em by this time, as well as the nose in my face. I wouldn't dhrive hard, if you'd give my weight in goold, since the time I dhruv the officer's ladies up to Misther Mc Alpine's. They never gave me pace or ase till I wint smart; well, I done as I was bid; and, by my conscience, *if* I did, sure I smashed my pole."

"Murdher! smashed your pole! and spilt the ladies on the road, Jim?"

"Troth an' I didn't, Mr. Kelly."

"A-thin, what did ye do with them, then, Jim?"

"Dhruv 'em without a taste of a pole, good or bad."

"You did, Jim?"

"I did, in troth."

"A-thin, tell us how, and God bless ye."

"Ah! a way of my own, I have," replied Jim, looking very knowing, "An' *I* wouldn't tell id to any body, 'case I'd lose my custom, intirely, for dhriving through desperate places; there's ne'er a boy at Mr. Castelloe's but mysel' that can go that road, and come back alive; so I get all the jobs on id; and they're the best to be had any where—always worth three half-crowns more to me than any o' the others. So, Mr. Kelly, I'll do my endavors not to smash the vahacle; but if I have that bad luck, I'll do as you bid me, purtend 'twas all my own fault, or lay the blame on my poor bastes. Troth, the young Lord wasn't out in regard of 'em; they're miserable looking craturs, sure enough; they were the worst I could find in the stable; so 'twill be quite asy to

make him think, if he sticks in a bog-hole, 'tis all their doin's, to say nothing of the dhriver"—he added, smiling roguishly.

At length they drove off, followed by the blessings of the crowd at the inn-door, in exchange for some more substantial tokens of good will on the part of the new candidate, and of that of their old and popular representative. The road lay through a wild country, with scarcely a trace of human habitation. For the first few miles they whirled along tolerably well, and Jim looked behind, every now and then, with a smile of triumph. As they proceeded, however, the jolting became "rather disagreeable." A little further on, "very disagreeable,"—and at last Lord Warringdon exclaimed at it, "as damnably disagreeable."

"Jim!" he cried "drive more carefully, you are shaking me to death!"

"Shaking you to death! my God, am I, my Lord? think o' that. I'll drive asy—that was just a bad spot that I didn't know.

was in id, my Lord; an' I wondher how it came in id; for this road gets the applause from all the roads in Ireland, for its goodness, my Lord—'tis as smooth as butthermilk, mostly."

"It is any thing but that, now," muttered his Lordship.

Jolt after jolt came, and each time the veracious Jim assured his Lordship that "'twas the last bad spot" on this best road in Ireland.

"The devil himself must have possessed me, when I first thought of coming into this infernal country," said the wretched candidate to himself, as he looked on the dreary waste around, and felt the rocks under him. "And I dare not complain—but must grin with delight all the time I am becoming pounded into a jelly!"

"Poor devil, I pity him, really I do, upon my soul!" murmured Wilmot, as he looked on the compressed lips and contracted brows of his young companion, which bore

evidence alike to the extremity of his suffering, and the heroism of his endurance.—"This road is really very bad," said he, with the tone of a man surprised at the discovery of a certain quality never before suspected to exist in an admired object—"I am afraid you are sadly shaken, my dear Lord?"

"A little," replied the Viscount, endeavouring to suppress a groan—"Oh it is nothing at all; a mere trifle. How far are we from Castle Wilmot now?"

"Not yet quite half-way," answered Mr. Wilmot.

"My God! I shall never get alive there," sighed his unfortunate companion to himself.

Mr. Wilmot did his best to beguile the tedium, and, alas! tortures, of the journey, by telling amusing anecdotes of the gentry and peasantry in his neighbourhood. Nay, he took more interesting ground, and counted up the best interests, and enlarged

on the best way of conciliating them; in fact, laboured to combine instruction and entertainment in his discourse. And Lord Warringdon tried all that man could try, to laugh at his host's capital stories. He knew that, both for the sake of the jester, and for the intrinsic value of the jest, if he had a laugh in him, he should bestow it on the present occasion; but the most he could accomplish was a smile; and even that was a miserable attempt, resembling rather the convulsion effected by the galvanic battery, than the graceful indication of pleasure, which usually set off the handsome mouth of the once captivating, but now suffering "exclusive."

All he had hitherto endured, however, was but "the crumpling of the roses" compared with what followed. The concussions became absolutely terrific—a seventy-four running aground might experience something like the joltings and bumpings of our poor carriage, as it swung from side to side;

now ascending to the heavens above, now descending to the depths below—now Mr. Wilmot tumbling over Lord Warringdon, and now, for variety, Lord Warringdon tumbling over Mr. Wilmot.

"What luck we had, sir," said Kelly, putting his head in at the carriage-window, and assuming a guileless, innocent expression of face, which deceived even his master—"What luck we had, to get this vagabone of a Jim to dhrive us—he's as dhrunk as a piper."

"Is he really?" enquired Mr. Wilmot.

"Sure, if he wasn't dhrunk, and as dhrunk as a baste, too," continued he, looking steadily at his master, and glancing with a smile at Lord Warringdon, who sat with his head between his hands, utterly exhausted,—"Sure if he wasn't, he wouldn't be dhriving the way he is; isn't he shaking you to bits? doesn't that shew he must be dhrunk, when any one but himself, the blackguard, would dhrive so asy, you might

thread a needle, going along. I'm afraid you are terribly joulted, my Lord?" added Mr. Kelly, in a commiserating tone.

"I am half dead," faintly articulated his Lordship.

"Upon my conscience," continued Kelly, "I've the greatest mind in the world to dismount, and give that dhrunken baste of a Jim as fine a flogging as he ever got in his life, for his impidence."

"For God's sake do not," cried Lord Warringdon, "or we shall be left on the road all night."

"Won't I my Lord? Oh, very well, I won't if your Lordship doesn't like I'd do it," replied Kelly, affecting submission to Lord Warringdon's request; "but if it wasn't for you, my Lord, upon my word and credit, Jim Naughten would be very little obleeged to himself this mornin', I can tell him that. Jim! you dhrunken baste! how dare you dhrive that way? if it wasn't for Lord Warringdon's begging you

off, I'd bate you while ever I could stand over ye, you villain, ye !"

"Long life to your Lordship!" roared Jim, "long life to your honour's Lordship, Member of Parliament for the county of ——, long life to him; he's a jewel of a boy—huzza! huzza!" and he whirled his hat over his head, playing all the antics beseeming his supposed condition.

Kelly cantered to his side—"I'm proud of ye, Jim; I always knew you were the devil for dhriving—but upon my word and credit, Jim, you flog all ever I seen, for dhriving to-day. Any one but yourself, would have had the carriage in *smithereens* long ago. Faith, Jim, I think you must have a *charum* from the good people for dhriving."

"Oh! Mr. Kelly, you pay me too many compliments entirely, sir," replied Jim, trying to look abashed—"I'm proud to have your applause, but, indeed, it far exceeds my desarvings, Mr. Kelly."

Jim thought no such thing; on the contrary, no praise he ever received came up to his notions of his own merit on a bad road. "How's the masther? I'm afraid he's kilt."

"No, indeed, thank God, he isn't," replied Mr. Kelly; "he's used to it, you know, Jim."

"And the other poor cratur?" demanded Jim.

"Oh—he's bedevilled, intirely."

"A-thin is he? no wondher, troth; God knows mysel' pities him, the cratur!" and here Jim "gave a taste of the whip" to his "bastes," and Mr. Kelly fell back to do the civilities by Mr. Symmons, Lord Warringdon's gentleman; not that Mr. Kelly particularly affected Mr. Symmons, but because Mr. Kelly stood in the light of host to Mr. Symmons, who had hitherto ridden along, silent and disdainful, as if he were the very incarnation of superciliousness; Lord Warringdon's success among the wild

Irish not enough interesting him to induce Mr. Symmons to compromise his own pretensions to *ton*, by condescending to commune with such utter barbarians. At length, however, he broke silence.

"I always thought that people of fortune in Ireland kept their carriages."

"You thought very right, Mr. Symmons," replied Mr. Kelly, with his usual urbanity.

"But, they are not like English ones, you know."

"To be sure they are; what else would they be like?" rejoined the Irishman of cast clothes.

"Why, English carriages are built for English roads; and Irish carriages are contrived, of course, for Irish roads."

"Irish roads!" repeated Kelly, with affected astonishment, but very genuine displeasure—"Irish roads," he continued, resuming his former tone of civility, "are like English ones, I suppose."

"Indeed, I suppose no such thing," replied Mr. Symmons.

"Why, what's the difference?" asked the other.

"Rather an important one," returned Mr. Symmons, sarcastically. "The English roads are proverbially the best in Europe; and the Irish ones, judging by my own experience, are the worst.—As for this, to be candid with you, I never saw any thing like it, my good fellow."

"Well, 'tis something, any how, to see what one never seen before," replied Mr. Kelly, with provoking quietness. "May be you'll be seeing more surprising things than that again, before you lave us."

"Indeed!" rejoined the "exclusive" valet, not condescending, however, to make any enquiries touching these wonders. "Pray when shall we arrive at the next town?"

"There's no town in it," returned his companion, sulkily.

"No town!" exclaimed Mr. Symmons,

much surprised. "Well, village, or whatever you call it—where can I procure a bowl of soup?"

"Cock ye up with your bowl of soup!" muttered the angry Hibernian—"ye impident, concated whelp!"—then he continued aloud—"We don't stop at any place, only to beat the horses." Kelly meant to bait, not to flagellate them, as his occasionally affected fine pronunciation might have led the reader to imagine.

"I shall be starved, man," exclaimed Mr. Symmons; "why the deuce didn't ye tell me this before?"

"Why didn't I tell you what?" enquired Mr. Kelly, composedly.

"Why, that there is nothing to be got to eat in this beg—" he stopped abruptly, catching a glance of the Irishman's eye, which he did not think encouraged his finishing the sentence. "I meant, Mr. Kelly, to ask you why you did not tell me that there was no Inn in this part of the country, and I should

then have put up a few sandwiches, or a cold chicken, or so, just to keep up my strength a little."

"To tell you the thruth, Mr. Symmons, I thought when the masthers done without could chickens, the servants might:" returned Mr. Kelly, with imperturbable composure.

"Confound the fellow's impudence!" muttered Mr. Symmons: "servants and masters, upon my word! there's radicalism and equality with a vengeance. Lord Warringdon," he resumed, aloud, "can fast better than I can—I have a bad digestion, and have been ordered by my physician to eat frequently and at regular hours."

"The ape! I wish to the Lord I had lave of the masther to give him something of my own cooking, to help his digestion!"

A silence of some moments ensued, which was broken a second time by Mr. Symmons.

"Pray, when shall we come to your master's estate?"

"My masther's estate!" cried Mr. Kelly, "sure what else have you been thravelling through, all day? and havn't half gone over it yet;" he added, with all the pride of an Irish follower.

"Humph! so all this bog," cried Mr. Symmons, laying somewhat offensive emphasis on the last word, "all this bog, then, is the Wilmot estate—" and something very like a sneer played round Mr. Symmons' mouth.

"Yes," replied Mr. Kelly, very wrathful, "all this bog, and some more bogs besides, and a great dàle that isn't bog, belongs to Misther Wilmot of Wilmot Castle—the first intherest in the county, and the largest property in the province—upon my conscience!" he muttered in a lower key—"I never had so much throuble in my life to keep my hands off a concated ass of his kind, than I have this blessed minute, not just to

take and chuck him, far and asy, into the middle of that same bog he's passing his remark upon, so mighty busy!"

"I cannot imagine," proceeded Mr. Symmons, "where all your voters come from —I have not seen a house yet, nor a tree, nor any thing giving one the idea of human habitation. You know the capital stories we have in England about Irish voters?" he went on facetiously—"shall I tell you one of them?"

"I'd advise ye not:" answered Kelly, speaking very quietly, but looking as if he were just in the humour to enforce his recommendation if necessary by some argument more cogent than words.

Just then, luckily perhaps, for Mr. Symmons' bones, Mr. Kelly's attention was attracted towards Jim, whose cries of "Hee-up! hee-up!" resounded in every note of the Irish scale of intonation; and then Jim chirped, coaxed, and cursed, talked, exhorted, and flogged; did every

thing in his power, in fact, by reason and coercion, to induce his horses to get out of the bog-hole, into which they had sunk up to their shoulders; but, alas! the harder he flogged, the deeper they floundered—he was at his wits' end.

"What's the matter, Jim?" enquired Kelly, who had seen the confusion, while engaged in his amiable colloquy with Mr. Symmons, and had hastened to learn the cause. "What's the matter, Jim?" he repeated.

"Oh! my God!" returned Jim, impatiently—"havn't ye eyes in your head, man? don't ye see what's the matther? I'm bogged, and, more be token, 'twas in this very same place I smashed my pole in, last year: 'the curse of the cross upon it!'"

"Give 'em a taste of the whip, Jim."

"Give 'em a taste of the divil! A-thin, Mr. Kelly, will ye jist throw a look at the craturs, and see the condition they are in—up to their shoulders in bog! What's this

for, at all?" roared Jim, tearing his hair in desperation and flinging his hat on the ground—"What in the world will I do? Mr. Kelly—God bless you! and tell me what's to become of us, at all!"

"What are you stopping for?" cried Mr. Wilmot from one window. "Has any accident happened the carriage?" cried Lord Warringdon, from the other.

"No sir—no my lord:" replied the veracious worthies addressed—"nothing at all, only a bit o' the harness that wint wrong."

"Mr. Kelly—" re-demanded Jim, half-crying, "what will I do at all?"

Mr. Kelly mused a second; then mounted the coach-box—surveyed the country in all directions; and his face suddenly brightened—"Now we have it!" he exclaimed, joyfully—and placing his bent fingers in his mouth, whistled shrilly and long. Almost immediately, figures were discernible, moving along the brow of a hill, that skirted the road—and in less than five

minutes, fifty or sixty stout fellows came jumping and hollowing across the bog.

"Glory be to the Lord, for all his mercies this day!" sighed Jim, making the sign of the cross.

"We are going to be robbed and murdered:" thought Mr. Symmons — "these Irish monsters are capable of any atrocity;" and he was preparing to save himself from the ferocious Mountaineers, by clapping spurs to his horse, but was prevented by a command from his master to examine into the state of the springs of the carriage; Lord Warringdon having certain misgivings as to the dependance to be placed on Jim's assertion, "that nothing at all was the matter."

When the group of peasants saw that Mr. Wilmot was one of the *bogged* travellers, they threw up their hats and shouted for joy.

"Here! boys!" cried Kelly, "lift it out, body and bones—horses and all! first

three cheers for the masther, and then put your shoulders to the wheels—here it goes! a long pull, a sthrong pull, and a pull altogether! now boys!"

As desired, they gave first the three cheers, so long and loud, that Lord Warringdon pressed his hands to his ears—they then "put their shoulders to the wheel," and placed the carriage once more on Terra Firma.

"Thank ye, my men:" said Mr. Wilmot.

"Thank ye, my fine fellows:" said Lord Warringdon.

"Ye're welcome, ye're welcome, to that, and more;" returned they, good-humouredly.

"This is Lord Warringdon, come to canvass the county;" observed Mr. Wilmot.

"And yourselves, my honest fellows among the number;"—added Lord Warringdon.

"Och! the masther is the one you must

ax, my lord:" replied the spokesman, with a smile—"we always vote the way the masther plazes, you know;" he added, however, with the courtesy characteristic, (in those days,) of an Irish peasant, and more particularly of a——Irish peasant. "Not but, indeed, we'd be glad, t'would be for your honour's lordship, he'd bid us vote; ye're welcome to Ireland, and the county of——."

"Thank ye, thank ye, my honest fellows—here's a couple of guineas to drink your master's health."

"And here's something to drink success to Lord Warringdon;" said Mr. Wilmot.

"Long life to ye both!" cried many voices—"the masther and the mather's frind for ever!"

"Lord Warringdon for ever!" cried Mr. Wilmot, who desired to give the canditate a more definite designation than that of "the masther's friend."

"Warringdon for ever!" they echoed—

Warringdon and Wilmot for ever! huzza! huzza!" and they shouted after the departing travellers, with all the energy and deafening clamour of three-score of Irishmen, with money in their pockets and good will in their hearts.

"Well, misther Symmons, what do ye think of Irish *'voters,'* now? what would ye take to tell one of them boys the comical stories ye have in England about 'em?"

Mr. Symmons was pleased to observe that "they were fine fellows," and there the conversation ended.

The road began to improve as they drew near to Castle Wilmot. Traces of Jim Flanagan's handy-work became apparent, by the diminution of jolts and accession of speed. Lord Warringdon, over-powered with fatigue, had sunk into a pleasing oblivion of aching bones. Mr. Wilmot amused himself with his thoughts. Mr. Symmons was grand—Mr. Kelly, and his humble friend, and ardent admirer, Jim Naughton, agreed

that the above-mentioned Mr. Symmons "was a fantastical *omadhoun*, that would never be good for any thing till he got a taste of the shillelagh;" and thus all journeyed along, until the plantations of Castle Wilmot gladdened their sight. Bonfires were burning on all the heights, far and near, in honour of the master's return. A huge one was blazing at the Castle Wilmot gate, in honour of their noble guest; and much whiskey was drunk, and much tobacco smoked, to testify their joy on his arrival; "lashins," of both those luxuries having been sent out by Lady Anne. Lord Warringdon was aroused from his slumber at ten o'clock at night, by a shout of welcome. In the confusion of the moment, he forgot where he was, and seeing the huge fire, and the wild countenances and tattered garb of the revellers gathered round it, he half-imagined he might have fallen among a set of Irish cannibals, who had prepared a fire to roast him at. This delusion was, how-

ever, but momentary. Mr. Wilmot's kind voice, bidding him welcome, recalled him to a sense of his real situation. He alighted, but could scarcely stand, so crippled, jolted, and bruised was he. As the mob huzzaed, he tried to bow and smile, however, and although nearly driven mad by the deep guttural roar of the men, and the shrill scream of the women and children, expressed himself delighted beyond measure at their flattering reception.

"Ye'ar late, sir;" observed Pat Murphy, as he led the way, with lights into the house. "My lady, and the young ladies, was mighty unasy about you're not coming to dinner, sir."

"The road was so bad," returned his master, "we could not come sooner."

"The road bad? was it indeed, sir?" exclaimed Pat; "'tis newly come to it, that's all I can say—ye're are welcome, my lord."

"Thank ye, my good fellow:" replied his Lordship.

"Are you lame, my lord? you seem to thread tinder."

"No—only stiff from the jolting:" he replied.

"That Jim must have dhruv ye mighty bad;" observed Pat.

"Bring us something to eat, directly, Pat;" said Mr. Wilmot, and meantime allow me to pioneer you to the drawing-room, my lord."

But his lordship objected to appearing in such trim before ladies; it was therefore arranged that they should sup by themselves in another room; and defer the presentation till the morrow.

CHAPTER VI.

For some days after his arrival at Castle-Wilmot, Lord Warringdon continued to feel the effects of Mr. Wilmot's roads, and Jim Naughton's driving. Nothing, however, could be more polite than were his assurances of satisfaction, and, indeed, admiration, of all he saw and heard, ate and drank, at Castle Wilmot.

"My journey," said he, smiling, "seems quite like an incident in a fairy tale. After having wandered through grand and extensive solitudes, under the care of a pow-

erful enchanter, at a stroke of his wand, the scene changes, and I find myself in a noble and ancient castle, surrounded by luxuries of every description; by all that can charm the eye, or gratify the taste; and, though last mentioned, not the least appreciated, the smiles of fair and gentle ladies."

Under the united influences of capital living (he had game and fish in perfection and abundance) and of cheerful society, Lord Warringdon was "the moral of a nice gentleman," if Pat Murphy be considered good authority;—we think that he is. In fact, the candidate continued in high good humour, amused at every thing, and even, in his turn, condescending to amuse.

"Amuse! Warringdon amuse! why he is one of us, you know; the thing is impossible!"

Dear people! we crave a moment's explanation. In the first place, pray recollect that your noble and apathetic brother is no longer in town; alas! not even in his ele-

gant retirement in the country: nay, that he no longer treads English soil, "at all, at all;" that, in fact, he is in Ireland. Now, unfortunately, there is something in the very air of Ireland which acts on the most pertinaciously rigid muscles, and makes those laugh who never laughed before, and never may again. In the second place, recollect that man is a gregarious animal. The individual, separated by some unlucky chance from his own herd, will fall in with another herd of his species. In the third place, consider he was not only alone in a country where apathy is ignorantly mistaken for stupidity, but also that he was absolutely necessitated, as a candidate, to make himself popular; and now, have we, even partially, succeeded in vindicating your erring friend?

But, to continue, as we, story-tellers, say:

The young lord, recollecting his father's caution concerning Lady Anne's match-

making talents, observed her carefully; and to his surprise and satisfaction, found in her habitual manner a decided refutation of the alleged gift.

Her ladyship had been very pretty; she was still interesting, and even loveable; and there were about her a softness and simplicity almost approaching to *naïveté*, which quite precluded the supposition of the existence of *arrières penseés* of any kind. All seemed clear and open as the noon-day.

"What a fool my father must be," thought the experienced Viscount, "to have suspected such an unaffected, unartificial woman as this is, of being a match-maker! I never yet knew him form a correct estimate of character;" and so, principally that he might have the satisfaction of proving his father wrong, he was unwittingly running the road to prove him right.

But Lady Anne only puzzled Lord Warringdon. She was, in truth, a consummate

actress: a female Proteus, who, if it became absolutely necessary, could change, at will, her very nature. She followed, to the very letter, the scriptural injunction of "being all things to all men;" and her facility in penetrating the motives and views of others fully equalled the variety and perfection of her own powers of transformation. She instantly saw, therefore, what was likely "to take" with Lord Warringdon, and manœuvred accordingly.

Upon hearing of his intended visit, she had arranged, at once, to marry him to one of her daughters; but could not decide which, till she should have slightly studied the "*carte du pays.*"

"Though educated with precisely the same care, my two unmarried girls are provokingly dissimilar," she said to herself; *to herself*, observe; for think not that Lady Anne kept any other confidante: "had Isabel Maria's good sense, or had Maria Isabel's beauty, I never could meet any

difficulties in my path. But I am, at present, placed thus: this man may, perhaps, be attracted by Isabel's beauty; but if he should happen to prove ugly, or silly, the world will not get Isabel to take any pains about him. Again; Maria, who would make no difficulty as to taking him, *he* may not choose to have;—and so, and in this teazing way, I am continually thwarted in my best-laid plans."

After the Viscount's arrival, and that she had reconnoitred him, Lady Anne decided on marrying him to her youngest daughter. She felt, however, rather unwilling to hurt Maria's feelings by abrubtly announcing her fiat; and trusted, therefore, to some favourable occasion for indirectly conveying it.

She and Maria were sitting alone, soon after the appearance of their guest.

"I have been studying Warringdon's character very carefully," observed Lady Anne, "and he is suspicious."

"Most young men of fortune are," rejoined Maria.

"I know:" returned Lady Anne, "*that*, however, I don't so much mind; one could easily throw him off his guard. But I'm sorry to say he is a thorough man of the world; has no feeling; never will fall in love"

"Tis'nt necessary that he should," said Maria, rising to poke the fire.

"Not always necessary, I grant you; but certainly highly desirable; and, in this case, I fear, absolutely indispensable."

"Why?" asked Maria.

"Because," answered her mother, "he is not the sort of man one can easily persuade to fancy himself in love, when he is not; neither is he the sort of man to commit himself, by some nonsensical speech, that means nothing, but which a girl's family choose to call something, and which a father, or a brother, calls him out for; in a word, he is a man never carried away by

feeling; always on his guard not to say what might be made a handle of against him on some future occasion; cold and cautious, though apparently the very reverse."

"Bad materials for *our* purpose," observed Maria; "but your conclusions jump with my own, Mamma; and so *I*, at any rate, must consider them to be well founded; and it is clear that I can have no chance, and Isabel, I fear, but a bad one."

Lady Anne secretly rejoiced at this voluntary renouncing of all claims on Lord Warringdon, on Maria's part; yet seemingly acquiescing in her daughter's opinion, observed, "I believe you are right; and, since you give up the pursuit, Maria, we must jointly take measures in favour of Isabel; for, although I do consider it difficult to manage him, I do *not*, by any means, look upon it as impossible. To begin our one little plot, then:—Whatever either of us may think of Warringdon, we must

say nothing to Isabel on the subject, but deceive her, like a child, for her own good —she must imagine herself captivated by him, or she will never even try to attract him; that is, in a serious, business-like way—you know all her romantic nonsense about affections and sympathies. Now, Warringdon is incapable of loving any thing but himself, but she must not think so, or she would not love him."

"But what is the use of making her love him," interrupted Maria, "or even fancy she does, if he be, as you say, too cold to fall in love, himself, and too cunning to suffer any body to marry him, if he does *not?*"

"Very true," rejoined Lady Anne, "but I will make *him*, too, dream that he is in love."

"Dream it!" exclaimed Maria laughing, "is it a *blasé* man like that? dear mamma! what can you be thinking of?—a simple boy, just come of age, brought up in a country

clergyman's family, one might possibly persuade out of his own senses; but, even you," she added playfully tapping her mother's cheek, "would fail in such an experiment on a man about town, like our right honourable and well esteemed guest, Viscount Warringdon — dream it, indeed!— never—never!"

Lady Anne listened with the utmost composure to her daughter's mockery, and proceeded thus:—"The difficulty you state is a considerable one, I admit, indeed I have before hinted it myself—yet, I hope, by my mode of attack, to prove it is not, at least, insuperable—Lord Warringdon, wherever he goes, finds himself an object of attraction to daughters, and of speculation to mothers—he is therefore continually on the *qui vive,* like the garrison of a besieged town, in fear of a *coup de main,* in fact, he is—mark me, on his guard against *designing* mammas; but in me he shall nothing find save simplicity and innocence."

"Yes, but as you want him to devour Isabel, and not yourself, what good will all the simplicity and innocence in the world, on your part, signify?" interrupted Maria, with a laugh.

"You must give me time, my dear Maria, to develope my plans. He never can suspect so indifferent and unguarded a mother as I shall appear to him to be; he must acquit me, at once, of deep design—of malice prepense—of premeditated evil. More than that. I shall make him think not only that I do not want his alliance, but that I actually avoid it."

"And how will you contrive that?"

"By appearing to have somebody else in view for Isabel."

"That would be an excellent method certainly, but who can you have in view?"

"Mc Alpine," replied Lady Anne.

"Mc Alpine!" echoed Maria; "Warringdon will never think that you could prefer such a creature to him."

"Yes, he must though; for I shall give him to understand that Isabel is engaged to Mc Alpine. You know he is dying for her, and the least encouragement would be enough to bring him to her feet."

"Yes," said Maria, "but Isabel will never consent to a project so full of what she would call artifice and deception."

"I don't intend that she shall know we have any project of the kind—I shall persuade her that I really wish her to marry Mc Alpine."

"Still I cannot see, for the life of me, how persuading her to marry Mc Alpine, is to be the means of marrying her to Warringdon."

"You are really very dull this morning, my dear Maria. I do not intend, of course, *absolutely* persuading her to marry Mc Alpine, only making her and every one else think that I do."

"Ah, yes, now I understand your meaning perfectly," rejoined Maria, "but if Warringdon is not in love with her, himself, what will he care whom she marries?"

"I know human nature, at least, men-of-fashion-nature, better than you do, Maria. Lord Warringdon is a man of pretention, vain of his person, vain of his fashion, vain of his rank and position in society, vain of his talent (he has some), he cannot, therefore, exist without being admired; his vanity then will be gratified by the preference which Isabel will unconsciously betray, for she is a bad dissembler—and on the other hand, he will be piqued by my apparent negligence—so, to spite the mother, he will marry the daughter—is not that a tolerable scheme?"

"Very," answered Maria, musing.

"And feasible?" asked her mother.

"Humph, as for that, I have my doubts; to me it appears somewhat theoretical."

"I wager you a Chantilly veil I succeed," said Lady Anne smiling.

"'Done!" cried Maria. And here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of visitors.

CHAPTER VI.

UPON all his canvassing visits, within riding distance, Lord Warringdon was accompanied by the young ladies as well as by their father; Lady Anne's object being to establish a certain intimacy between the parties, before she stepped in, with Mr. Mc Alpine, in her hand, to break it up. These excursions were, like most equestrian parties of ladies and gentleman, highly favourable for beginning and continuing a flirtation. Indeed, Lady Anne insisted that riding was infinitely more useful than walk-

ing for getting on with the men, combining, as she said, the advantages of a tête à tête (which you can always manage without having the air of arranging), with all the gaiety and frankness warranted by social manners and intercourse. Then, ladies are timid on horseback, and require many little offices of gallantry and protection; (by the way, it is remarkable a woman seldom screams outright, though ever so scared, if the man she wishes to attract be at her side; her ear-piercing appeal being reserved to arouse a dull, a careless, or a straying attendant.)

Upon the favourable occasions alluded to, Isabel scarce ever pretended to be alarmed, however,—we can say so much for her; but, when a little frightened, at her horse sticking in a bog, or backing towards the edge of a precipice, on a mountain road, she certainly affected to be more so; encouraging, in fact, rather than contending with her fears; for, though not tutored

by her mother, Isabel was aware how interesting a woman appears to a man when claiming, evidently against her own will, or design, his protection.

Well, the Viscount proved a very attentive cavalier; why so? as much for the sake of the daughter's beauty, as the father's votes? Ask Lady Anne. But Lord Warringdon, himself, said *to* himself, that she chatted agreeably; was well-mannered; and, altogether, "a very nice person."

Poor Isabel, on her part, was even better disposed towards him.—In her eyes he appeared to be more than "a very nice person;" —he was a loveable one. She thought him strikingly handsome, and possessing all the polish of high breeding, without its coldness. We must add that he could be agreeable, too, in many ways; among the rest, by telling anecdotes of people known to his auditors, either personally or by report; or by repeating good things which he had heard; and, as the actor often gets more credit by

his personification of a character than the author for its delineation of it, so Lord Warrington earned from Isabel a reputation for cleverness, merely on the strength of his recollections, and adaptation of the cleverness of others. To conclude; he had spent much time abroad; spoke the foreign languages well,—for an Englishman, surprisingly well; knew a little of many things, and took the tone of knowing a great deal of all:—in a word, was just the one to be a "pleasant fellow" among men, and a "nice creature" among women.

But suppose the Viscount had not been heir to an earldom, and a hundred thousand per annum, very little encumbered? Would Isabel's usual penetration have failed, in that case, to discern in him some points less to his advantage? Again we say, ask Lady Anne. And, like another personage, not to be named, just as we speak of her ladyship, she re-appears on the scene.

The time had come to avail herself of Mr. Mc Alpine;—she was a little puzzled how to get at him; Mr. Wilmot entered the room with a letter in his hand, announcing Mr. Mc Alpine's intended arrival that evening, to dinner.

Lord Warringdon and Isabel had been looking over some music, and he was requesting her to sing, and she was preparing to oblige him, when her mother exclaimed "Good news, Isabel, Mc Alpine is to be here almost immediately; so run off," she continued, in a lower tone, but still loud enough to be overheard by Lord Warringdon, "run off and dress; I want you to be in your best looks to-day."

Isabel stared in astonihsment. — Her mother smiled: — Isabel was completly at fault.

"It is not time to dress yet," she observed, returning to the instrument.

"Isabel," resumed her mother, "I wish to speak with you a moment." And so

saying she left the room, followed by her daughter, who could not help wondering why Mr. Mc Alpine's arrival should be such good news to her, seeing she abominated him; and why she should take more pains with her toilette on this day than on any preceding one.

Her mother addressed her thus :—

"My dear Isabel, I have particular reasons, which I will explain to you some other time, for wishing you to please Mc Alpine."

"But I cannot endure him, mamma; you know I cannot," interrupted Isabel.

"He is a worthy, excellent young man, and would make you a very good husband."

"God forbid!" returned Isabel; "I would rather die than marry him."

"Folly, my dear; any one who had not a prior attchment might very well contrive to marry him, and to like him very well, too; and pray do you like any one else?"

"No;" replied Isabel, blushing and hesitating.

"Very well, then," observed Lady Anne, "I request that, since you have nothing to object against Mr. Mc Alpine, except that you do not happen to be desperately in love with him, you will treat him with more consideration than hitherto you have been pleased to do; and also that you will henceforward think and act like other young women of your age and station, and not reject eligible offers because 'this man is too tall;' that 'too short;' one 'to fair;' another 'too dark;' somebody else because he doesn't sing; and somebody else because he sings too much: your father can give you no money, and you are no longer a mere child; I would advise you, as your sincere friend, as well as your affectionate mother, to consider your position well. and if Mr. Alpine remain favourably disposed towards you, to accept his attentions; it will be much better than riding about, talk-

ing nonsense to Lord Warringdon, who will be off, to-morrow on next day, and if he happen to see you again, scarce remember you, perhaps."

Isabel coloured deeply, partly from confusion, and partly from indignation at her mother's supposition, but she remained silent.

"Do, my sweet Isabel, do as I wish you," continued Lady Anne, kissing her cheek; "you never will repent having followed my advice."

She then quitted Isabel, who did not return for some time to the sitting-room. That she had not passed the interval in very agreeable meditations might be inferred from a slight redness about her eyes, and a langour and dejection of manner, that struck and interested Lord Warringdon;—he thought she had never looked so well; he told her so; and her pale cheek glowed,—and she looked away for a moment, and when their eyes met again, hers were filled with tears.

"Lord Warringdon," said Mr. Wilmot, "before Mc Alpine comes, I must tell you what sort of person you are about to see;—first, as the most important point, what he he has,—then what he is; he has ten thousand a year, unencumbered: *that*, you will say, concerns Maria and Isabel more than you; but, however, this concerns you,—he has the next best interest to mine in the county;—in politics, he is a staunch tory, and so he is likely to remain, for he has not yet half provided for his poor relations:" (N.B. This was in the good, the halcyon days of toryism in Ireland, when the favourite candidate was sure to be the one who would bestow, or promise, at least, the greatest number of places.) Mr. Wilmot proceeded: Mr. Mc Alpine and I are excellent friends; that's to say, we don't either of us care if the other broke his neck."

"My dear! my dear!" interrupted Lady Anne, "how can you talk so carelessly? Lord Warringdon will really believe you

are serious; very extraordinary under our peculiar circumstances;" looking over at Isabel, "you should not, indeed, my love, say such things, really it is quite shocking." She said this in a hurried, deprecating tone, and then, resuming her usual manner,—"recollect the liberal support he has always afforded you, without stipulations of any kind, for a single friend."

"Oh, I recollect perfectly," replied her husband, laughing; "he monopolizes all my interest, on the plea that he had not bargained, like others, before-hand. By Jove! his support was like the barbarian allies of the Roman empire, a service that cost dearer than his enmity."

Lady Anne fidgetted about while he was speaking, and seemed exceedingly annoyed, but why he could not well comprehend, not being aware that Mr. Mc Alpine's failings were a forbidden subject at Wilmot castle, so he continued:—"Though my friend, Mc Alpine is the soul of honour,

take care that you have witnessess to your conversation, or —— no matter what," he added with a laugh. "But only if you have not a friend present, you may have to employ one on less amiable business, some future day; as I was once obliged to do, and my friend Mc Alpine then immediately remembered all he had forgotten; pistols are wonderful helps to a treacherous memory."

"Did you ever hear any thing like your father?" exclaimed Lady Anne, addressing her eldest daughter, "to talk in such a way of Mc Alpine before Isabel—highly improper."

"What's improper?" enquired Mr. Wilmot.

Lady Anne remained silent, shaking her pretty little foot in assumed displeasure.

"What's improper, Anne, my love?" enquired he once more,

"Your abuse of Mr. Mc Alpine, my dear."

"My abuse! I am not abusing the man at all—I don't care about him one way or the other."

"Yes! but that is the very thing I complain of,—you ought to care."

"Why, my love?"

"My dear Wilmot," rejoined Lady Anne, "you must forget, surely."

"I can't imagine," said he to himself, "what the devil she is at."

The rapid approach of horsemen up the ascent to the castle turned the conversation. A few minutes afterwards, Mr. Mc Alpine made his appearance amid the group.

"Delighted to see you," said Lady Anne, in her softest tone of welcome.

"How dy'e do, my dear fellow?" said Mr. Wilmot, "glad to see you;"—and Mr. Wilmot *was* glad to see him, because it happened to be in his own house, and there his greatest enemy would no longer be treated, or even considered, as such. We shall take advantage of the half-hour before

dinner, to give a sketch of the *morale* and *physique* of Mr. Mc Alpine, of Mc Alpine Castle.

To begin with his outward man, that being the most important division of the two-fold nature of a young male acquaintance. Mr. Mc Alpine was considered by all who had the pleasure of knowing him, (except himself) as a specially ill-looking person. 'Tis fair to state, however, what really *was* his appearance, in order that our readers may judge whether he, or his acquaintances, were right. He was very tall, and very thin, with a very short body, and very long limbs, that were always straying about to all points of the compass, as if each was setting forward, by itself, on a voyage of discovery through the world; his hair was very red; his eyes very white; his teeth very yellow; his mouth very wide; and his nose very broad—so far for his person.. With respect to his mind, Nature had dealt a little more favourably by him.

Originally he had not been quite deficient in intellect; but, unfortunately, his early education had been neglected; in fact Mr. Mc Alpine arrived at years of discretion, before he became heir-at-law to his present estate, seven or eight good people having been in the entail upon it: gradually, however, they died without "issue in tail male"—and when he succeeded to the property, he could barely read and write. He had sufficient good sense, however, to feel his deficiencies; and gave a still rarer proof of understanding, by endeavouring to remedy them; he bought good books, and read and profited by them, and thus effected wonders; but, unluckily, he imagined, comparing himself with himself, that as he now knew much more than he formerly had done, he actually knew more than any one had ever known before him. Eventually he decided in his own mind that nothing could equal him in knowledge or beauty, and, consequently, put a high price on himself "in

the marrying way;" and though he was always talking of taking a wife, never could be induced to decide, lest he might, as he said, "throw himself away." While he was thus deliberating, Isabel Wilmot returned from the Continent, the theme of universal admiration. He soon came to the solemn determination "that she was just the person worthy of becoming Mrs. Mc Alpine." He did not, however, say too much in commendation of her, lest he should raise the market on himself; only pronouncing her to be "a nice girl, certainly, and if married to a man she loved, one that would turn out a charming woman; but all depended on that; at present she thinks too much of herself a great *dale*." Occasionally Mr. Mc Alpine's pronunciation was somewhat broad, and formed a curious and amusing contrast with his high flown style and sentimentality.—"She wants anim*a*tion," (we mark thus a peculiar drawling emphasis in Mr. Mc Alpine's articulation) "because as yet she's indifferent about

plasing, but once let her love a man of a certain order of mind, and she will be absolutely seraphic—she's clever, and accomplished, and beautiful; but she's not, as yet, inter*es*ting, because, as yet she has not loved." So, to give the finishing touch to Isabel's perfections, he did all in his power to inspire her with a passion; but the young lady, someway, was deficient in taste, as well as gratitude, and by no means seconded Mr. Mc Alpine's benevolent views for her improvement.

Maria thought it a thousand pities that the owner of Mc Alpine Castle should be lost to the family, so she laughed, and talked, and laboured, might and main, to get into his good graces,—all to no purpose; a pleasant, lively, off-hand girl, was his detestation. Take notice, Mr. Mc Alpine was all romance and refinement. "Maria Wilmot has no softness, no sentiment, no manner; besides, I MUST have, he would sometimes say, grinning, and displaying his

terrific set of teeth, besides I MUST have a fine woman—that is an indispensable necessary of life to me; beauty is the aliment of *my* existence. No—if I take either, it shall be Isabel. I fix on her." But though he fixed upon Isabel, Isabel did not fix upon him; he continued, however, to call her stiffness, reserve, and her coldness, modesty; never for an instant suspected they could be any thing else, where he was in question.

Lady Anne had not yet decided whether she should make her younger daughter marry him, or make him marry her elder, when the arrival of Lord Warringdon caused her to change her whole plan of operations. She now courted him upon the principle that we offer a plate of meat to one lap-dog, intended for another—by the way, this neat and appropriate simile reminds us that it is time to return to our family party, whom we left counting the minutes until dinner should be announced.

CHAPTER VII.

All are now seated at dinner. Lord Warringdon's thoughts and attentions (we will not say his affections, because, like lady Anne, we are not quite sure he has any) are divided between a plate of salmon, just out of the water, and the pretty downcast eyes of his fair and flirting equestrian companion, Isabel. But when we state that his attentions were thus divided, we do not take upon ourselves to assert that the division was perfectly equal, it might be, perhaps, somewhat like an Irish halving of a thing — one half a little bigger than the

other; perhaps, also, the bigger one might not have fallen to the lady's share. Under the circumstances of the case, however, she might consider herself peculiarly fortunate in having any portion at all; for a man of modern times, who thinks of the lady of his love, when he has any thing else to think of, particularly so good a thing as salmon in season, gives a proof of the depth and intensity of his passion, equal to that which blowing out his brains would have been some forty years ago. Isabel, however, had been placed by her mother in precisely the position best calculated to ensure as much worship as was possible, to be, namely, just opposite the viscount; so that whenever his eyes were off his plate, they naturally fell on his vis à vis. And, what we look at, LadyAnne knew, we think of; and indeed Lord Warringdon was obliging enough not only to think of Isabel, but to think of her all that lady Anne was anxious he should think, viz., that, "she was

a very lovely girl, that she seemed to be very much inclined to fall in love with him, and that it was a great pity to give so much beauty and taste to such a stupid ugly fellow as Mc Alpine;" said ugly fellow being at the moment whispering with his mouth full, sundry soft things to his fair, but listless neighbour, and, in the earnestness of his discourse, leaning across her plate, and staring full in her face, with his large white eyes, which he rolled about in the most approved style of *loverism.* Isabel would have pawned a joint of her pretty taper finger to have dared turn her back on him, or to slap his face; and in her struggles to conceal her disgust, for she knew that her mother's eye was fixed on her, she became silent and constrained. Now, any other man but Mc Alpine would have been hereupon offended—he, on the contrary was charmed, for he interpreted the care with which she avoided his soft glances, or interrupted his compliments, as

undeniable proofs of a tender and absorbing passion, which, from maidenly reserve, she laboured to conceal.

"Why did you not wait for the gentleman you speak of?" she asked, eagerly seizing on an observation just made, to turn his attention from her beauty and his own admiration.

"Because," answered he, "Mr. Barham was not quite ready to accompany me—and I could not wait; for" lowering his voice into a whisper, soft and tender as that of the boy-god himself, he added, "I was languishing for a *bame* (beam) from the sun of my soul, fair Isabel's bright eyes—for what is existence to *me* when absent from *her*, the source of light, and life, and hope!"

"But don't you think he may be offended?" enquired Isabel, not appearing to notice his twaddle.

"I explained to him that I had important avocations at Mc'Alpine Castle, which would prevent my having the pleasure of

accompanying him there. I have been expecting him these three days past, and am half-surprised I did not meet him here, spell-bound by the facinations of the captivating enchantress of Wilmot Castle—the fair Isabella—that cruel but charming creature—whose gaze is death—who lures but to destroy."—

A loud knocking at the hall-door, interrupted Mr. Mc Alpine's speech—and caused such a sensation, among the whole party, as would scarcely be credited, except by those who know by experience what can be effected by the most trifling occurrence which promises to break up the usual routine of a country-house life. While every one was wondering who it could be, and each sat with his or her knife or fork arrested, as if by a spell, in his or her hand; while all ears were eagerly bent to catch the glory due to first discoverers; and while all eyes were rivetted, as if they possessed the property of lynx vision, and

would pierce the very walls; the door was softly opened, and father John Molloy stole on tip-toe, into the room.

"Mercy on us! 'tis only you, father John!" exclaimed Maria. "I thought it was some prince in disguise, come to crave hospitality, and who, in return for a dinner and a bed, would fall in love with me—but never mind, sit down, father John—here by me, and tell us some news."

"I beg your pardon, Miss, for a minute, I have something to say to your papa;" and so saying, he crept round the table to Mr. Wilmot, and made some observation in a low voice, to which the other replied:

"Certainly—beg of him by all means to walk in—why did you not bring him in at once, father John?"

"I was delicate of taking a liberty, Mr. Wilmot, Sir;" replied he, looking at lady Arne, from whose mind he desired to efface, by his present respectful demeanour, the

somewhat unfavourable impression made by his brother's conduct in the best room.

"I'll go myself;" said Wilmot, starting up, he suddenly stopped short, however, and whispered to the priest, "you are sure e isn't one of those fellows with papers?"

"Ah, not at all, sir—he's a gentleman from England—an elegant fellow as ever I'd wish to see, and mighty agreeable."

"Who are you talking about?" enquired Maria, pricking up her ears, at the words "gentleman from England—elegant fellow, &c."

Lady Anne's sense of hearing, equally acute as that of her daughter's, was roused by the same gratifying sounds, and enquired with pleased alacrity—

"What is the matter, my love? Is there any one coming, Mr. Molloy?"

Both the persons addressed had, however, disappeared before her question had reached their ears. Meantime, the party, with the exception of lady Anne and Maria,

proceeded in their agreeable occupations, and waited patiently until time should unravel the mystery, if mystery there were. But Miss Wilmot and her mother sat on thorns, during the few seconds of Mr. Wilmot's absence; and their satisfaction may be imagined, but certainly not described, at seeing him return, accompanied by a fair, and rather good looking and gentlemanlike young man.

"This gentleman," said Mr. Wilmot, ushering him in, "was found by father John, upset by a drunken driver, about ten miles off—the man had quite lost his way—so Mr. Molloy very properly became his guide and conducted him here. Lady Anne, and my daughters, as well as myself, will do all in our power," he added, smiling, "to induce you to forgive our bad roads and worse drivers."

During the progress of this speech, bows and smiles on both sides had been

exchanged, and the traveller had accepted the proffered seat near Maria.

"God bless me! can that be you, Mr. Barham?" exclaimed Mr. Mc Alpine, "I had not the *laste* idea it was you—how d'ye do? I'm very glad to see you at last—Wilmot, this is the gentleman I told you that I had been expecting."

"Really—who could have thought it? is it possible? how very odd!" &c., &c., ran from mouth to mouth, as is usual on such occasions as the present.

"I am afraid you are very much fatigued;" observed lady Anne, in the soft accents habitual to her when addressing the young of the other sex.

"Oh no! I am much obliged to you, not in the least;" replied Mr. Barham, "quite delighted, I assure you—I think it capital fun, being overturned in a bog-hole—I like it of all things—'tis quite an adventure, you know, and so Irish, like what one sees in a play, you know—never would

happen one in England, if one was travelling for ever."

"Then you have never been in Ireland before, I suppose?" observed Maria.

"Never; and I am so glad I've come!"

"You like it then?"

"Oh yes, of all things—never laughed so much in all my life as since I have been in Ireland. To-day, I thought I should have died I laughed so, when I was thrown out of the carriage—it was capital! there was the driver in such a fright, you know, for fear I was killed, and when he found I wasn't a bit hurt, he got afraid I'd complain of him to his master; and began cursing his horses, and swearing 'twas their fault, and not his; and then he tried to get me up, and couldn't, he was so drunk—then he fell over me, and neither of us could stir, I was laughing so, and he was so drunk; and there we should have lain all night I suppose, only your friend Mr. Moily was kind enough to bring me here.

"Very happy to have had the pleasure of seeing you," replied Maria, in her usual good-natured tone—"He seems a sad fool, poor young man," thought she. "I wonder, is he rich?" Her thoughts upon this point were, in the course of the evening, most satisfactorily terminated by a scrap of dialogue, she overheard between him and the Viscount.

"Pray, may I ask," said Lord Warringdon," are you one of the Barhams of Leicestershire?"

"To be sure I am; Barham of Cralcourt, myself: you know the Cralcourt hounds?"

"Famous all over England," rejoined Lord Warringdon. "So, you are Barham of Cralcourt; your father used to be greatly on the turf. Has he many horses running now?"

"No, I don't think he has," returned the other, laughing, "unless he has found some in Heaven—he has been dead these two years."

"Happy fellow," observed Lord Warringdon, "your own master—'the world before you where to choose' like our first parents."

"Not my own master yet—I'm not to be of age for a year-and-a-half, you know; and I have got such a tiresome old fellow for a guardian; keeps me so tight, you can't think; Sir Willoughby Turner of Mandeville Park; lives near Melton, you know; I can't bear him—he has got three such ugly daughters, you can't think."

Maria, who had edged her chair close to Mr. Barham's, on the discovery that he was a rich minor (the Cralcourt estate was eighteen thousand per annum), here joined the conversation.

"Do you mean," she asked, laughing, "that your guardian's having three ugly daughters is the original cause, or only an additional one, for not liking him? Poor man; you should pity, rather than dsilike him for that."

"Well, so I do; I pity him very much,

I'm sure; and them, too, poor girls; for I'm sure they will never get married—unless Sir Willoughby gets people to marry 'em, the way he wanted me; but there was no reason I should, when I didn't like it, was there?"

"No, indeed," replied Maria, as frankly as if she was in no way concerned, in a question which touched ugly girls, who wanted to find husbands. But, indeed, never, on similar occasions, did she betray any thing like *esprit de corps;* she could laugh as heartily at a jest against plain women, or husband-hunting ones, as if she were a beauty, and had refused half her male acquaintances. Who, then, could suspect the plain, but good-humoured, laughing, Maria Wilmot, of being dangerous or designing? Certainly not Mr. Barham of Cralcourt, whom, from this hour, she marked as her victim. Encouraged by her approbation of the exertion of free-will he had evinced with respect to marrying either of

the Miss Turners, he proceeded with his confidential communications thus:

"So when I found he wanted me to marry Ellen Turner, whether I would or no—I cut and ran."

"You were quite right," observed Maria, "I like to see young men have proper spirit."

"I told him, you know, I was going to Paris, and he began to give me such a lot of advice about *rouge et noir*, and to keep out of mischief, and all that sort of thing; so I promised I would; and he asked me how long I should stay, and I said about three months; so I should not be in the least surprized if they were all by this time in Paris, after me; and wondering why they can't find me."

"So you did not go to Paris, after all?"

"Lord bless you, no; I guessed they would be after me, so I came here; they will be so surprised when they hear I'm in Ireland; don't you think they will?"

"Capital!" exclaimed Maria, laughing, (she could laugh, as other women cry or faint, whenever she chose)—"Capital; I give you credit for that idea."

"But the best of it is, they can't hear a word of it, for a long while, for nobody knows where I am gone, I kept it such a secret!" I did not even bring a servant with me, for fear he might tell—just for a lark, you know. I was determined to have some fun by myself at last—wasn't I right?"

Maria here burst into one of her best fits of laughing, partly natural, partly affected, to please Mr. Barham's un-aristocratic laughter-loving propensities.

"What are you laughing at? do tell me, Miss Wilmot," laughing already himself, from sympathy.

"Why, I was thinking, Mr. Barham, that your friends will be sure to look for you, every day, at the *Morgue!*"

"The *Morgue!*" repeated he, nearly screaming with delight—"Oh! so they will,

I'm positive!—I never thought of that—how good! Oh! what capital fun!"—and he almost fell off his chair in a convulsion of glee, at Maria's happy idea. "Oh, Miss Wilmot, you will kill me," continued he, when sufficiently recovered from his transport to articulate intelligibly—"Hang me if I have done any thing but laugh, laugh, ever since I arrived in Ireland! I never saw such a place for fun in my life. I wonder Irish people ever leave Ireland; they never can laugh half so much any where else. I should like so to be an Irishman! Oh! Miss Wilmot, Mr. Molly told me such a droll story, coming along, about somebody playing him a trick at a funeral; I don't exactly recollect what it was, though. I wish you would ask him to tell it over again, will you? I should be so much obliged to you"

Maria was very well disposed to call in the assistance of so faithful an ally as Father John, to aid her virtuous exertions in the task of entertaining their new guest.

"Father John, I want you — here's a petitioner for one of your good stories."

"What good story, Miss Maria?" enquired Father John, quite surprised to find he was considered a teller of good stories.

"Oh! the one about the funeral, Mr. Molloy, if you please," said Mr. Barham.

"The one about the funeral," repeated Father John, slowly and musingly; "upon my word and credit, Mr. Barham, it fails me to remember what story you mane about a funeral. Can't you recollect some of the perticklars?"

"Somebody you thought was dying, and who was not."

"Oh! I remember now—Dan Murphy—But that's no story at all, Mr. Barham, but the blessed truth, I'm sorry to say; not but that I laugh sometimes myself, when I think how I was nicked out of my corpse;" and the good-humoured priest again laughed heartily at the recollection.

"Oh, it is all so good, Mr. Molloy; pray tell it again, will you?"

Lord Warringdon here joined the group, and added his solicitations to those of Mr. Barham, for the "funny corpse-story," though not, by many degrees, so great an *amateur* of fun as his Leicestershire compatriot. Lord Warringdon had sufficiently benefitted by Irish air to be able to listen, with tolerable satisfaction, to an Irish anecdote; besides, he was canvassing the county, and, of course, the priests.

"Pray, my dear sir, oblige us," he said.

"With all the pleasure in life, my lord. Most happy to contribute to your entertainment, gentlemen. But, upon my word, I'm afraid you'll be mighty disappointed, if you expect any great amusement, for 'tis nothing but just what happened to myself and Father Costelloe: that's my shuperior in the parish, the parish priest, you know."

"I thought," interrupted Mr. Barham, "you were the parish priest, yourself."

"I wish to the Lord I was," rejoined Mr. Molloy: "no, God help me! I'm only the coadjutor,—the curate, you know," observing that his English auditors did not understand the term. "Well, myself, and Father Costelloe, and Mrs. Priest,—that's the priest's neice-in-law, married to one Costelloe, that keeps a public house hard by Father Costelloe's,—we call her Mrs. Priest because there are so many Costelloes in the place, we'd never know which was which, if we did not call her by some name that wasn't her own; well, they and I were talking of one thing or other, one night, over our punch, when, all of a sudden, there comes the sorrows of a sassarara at the door; the Lord save us, says I; who have we got here? 'Who has the assurance and impertinence to come to my door at this unseesonable hour of the night?' cries Father

Costelloe, spaking in his fine English manner. (Take care, God bless you, Miss Maria, and don't tell him I say so). 'For one farthing,' says he, 'I'd *keen* the fellow, (cane, he meant) 'whoever he is, for his impudence.' I forgot to say it was Shrove-Tuesday, of all the days in the year. How do you know, Mr. Costelloe? says I; (he thinks it grand to be called Mr.) how do you know, says I, but it might be a crature coming to get married, smart out of hand, afore lent. 'Mr. Molloy,' says he, drawing himself up the way he does when he wants to be mighty grand entirely (you know, Miss Maria?); 'I would not choose, for the best wedding in my parish, nor the best funeral, either, to be disturbed at my repasts.' How comical you are, thinks I: any way, it wouldn't be you that would get the ra'al disturbance; God help me! There isn't a man in the parish, gentlemen," said he, turning to his auditors, "that earns his victuals harder than myself;—rain, snow,

or hail, at cock crow, or pitch dark, away I am, tramping the bogs and mountains, while other people, that gets the two shares and more of the dues, are lying snug in their beds, or sitting over their warm fire and comfortable tumbler. But, what can't be cured must be endured,—no use fretting; grief killed the cat, we're told, so, I'll finish my story. May be, says I, it might be a crature that isn't *expected.*"

"Somebody dying," said Maria to the gentlemen, "not *expected to live.*"

"Do you think, says he, I would suffer myself to be disturbed, at this hour, by the best corpse in my parish? Well, in the middle of this, in walks Mrs. Priest: I forgot to say, she had slipped out of the room, half an hour before, but I never perceived it, 'Guess the news, gentlemen,' says she, seeming mighty plased, 'My grandmother! says I.' 'No, ra'al good news,' says she; 'Dan Murphy won't pass the night.' 'Don't bother us.' says I; 'sure he's always dying,

and a sorrow a one of him is dead yet,—God forgive me for cursing,' says I. 'Well, he's dying now in ra'al earnest.' 'How do you know?' says I. 'Wasn't his son here, a minute ago, tearing the house down, like mad?' 'And where is he now?' says I, 'till I spake to him.'—'You can't spake to him now,' says she, 'for he's gone up to the castle, to spake to Pat Murphy, his cousin, to tell him all about it, that he may be ready to attend the funeral, and bring what's wanting, you know;' looking mighty knowing at me. 'Arrah! no: its joking, you are, Mrs. Priest,' says I; for she's always at her thricks and schames, making fools of Father Costelloe and myself, telling us this one is going to be married, and that one expected, so I'm always on my guard with her; but this turn she spoke so sarious, and looked so plazed, I was thricked entirely, and made sure poor Dan was dying in earnest at last: God knows 'twas time for him, if ever he intended it.

But his equal for toughness I never seen: he has had Mrs. Finn, Mrs. Wilson, and the doctor at the dispensary at him, for these five years back, and even they couldn't send him off. Not an Easther came, but we expected our Easther dinner of him,—for his funeral would be the finest in the parish, there's such a dale of Murphys in it, and so well off as they are! the snuggest men to be seen in the province. But what made me give in to the joke, entirely, was the hurry Father Costelloe was in to get me off,—he wouldn't give me time to finish my tumbler, or chat a bit with Mrs. Priest.

"Well, it was pitch-dark,—raining cats and dogs, and the wind blowing so, you'd think 'twas ould Nick cooling his tay,—such a night I never seen for hardship and contrariness,—my horse and myself coming down every minute. Father Costelloe broke the crature's knees the last time he dined here; and 'tisn't the first horse he sarved so, and no wonder, poor man, he grows so

corpulent! Well, at last, I come to my journey's end. When I got to the poor man's door, I put on a mighty grave face,—you'd think my life was bound up in poor Pat Murphy's: not but I was ra'ally sorry for the crature, now that I thought he was dying in earnest, and that all would be soon over with him.

"I fastened my horse to the latch of the door: 'God save all here,' says I. "*Cead mille faltha*," says Kutty, Dan's wife, smiling, and looking mighty plased. 'Them women,' thinks I to myself, 'are the dickens, sure enough! see, now, how well plased Kutty is, and her husband, who was always a good one to her, going from her, the crature!'—'Is he sinsible, Kutty,' says I. 'Sinsible! Father John? to be sure he is; why wouldn't he? he's not bad enough for that, yet.' Ah, then, how much worse would you have him, Kutty,' says I, 'if you wouldn't have him dead intirely;—can he spake, Kutty?' says I. "Ah, then, why wouldn't

he spake, Father John?' says she. Myself couldn't make head or tail of her, 'so,' says I, 'bring me to him, Kutty, says I, and then I'll see myself how he is.' 'God bless your reverence, 'tis you that are fond of him, sure enough,' says she, 'to come all the ways this blessed night to see him; I'll sind for him, Father John,' says she. 'Send for him!' says I, 'what in the world do you mane, woman?' says I. 'I'll send for him to Derrymanagoslogh, I mane, Father John,' says she. 'It's a wonder he wouldn't rather die in his own house,' says I. 'So he would, if it was dying, he was,' says she. 'Why, what else is he doing, then?' says I. 'Smoaking and drinking, like the rest of the company, I b'lieve,' says she. 'What company are you talking of, at all, woman?' says I. 'Ah, sure, he's gone to the lower parish, beyant, to a dragging home of a daughther of a first cousin of his sisther's husband, that's married to a dacent boy, a cousin of his own.' 'Murder alive!' says I

to myself, 'and all the slavery I got driving like mad through the bogs, and my elegant tumbler of punch left cooling!' Well, I thought it did no good to be cross to poor Kutty, because her husband wasn't dying just to convanience me and Father Costelloe; so I put the best face I could upon the matter, and so I said I was mighty happy to find Dan was so much better, and off I set home."

"Oh! just tell me, before you go any further, what you mean by a dragging home," interrupted Mr. Barham.

"A dragging home, you know, is the same as a hauling home," returned Father John.

"Yes, but I don't know what that means either," replied the young Englishman.

"Well, then, I'll tell you what it manes: —a dragging home, or hauling home, is when a girl of one parish is married to a boy of another, and that 'tis too far for the

young man's people to come to go to the wedding; when she comes home to her husband's friends, they have another wedding, equal to the first, and that's what they call a dragging home."

"Thank you, for your explanation," said Lord Warringdon, "and now let us hear the sequel of your amusing adventure."

"You're extremely polite, my lord; but, indeed, I'm afraid I'm tiring you, and the rest of the company, with such a long rigmarole, about nothing at all."

"Oh, no," exclaimed Mr. Barham, eagerly; "I'm sure every body must like to hear it, 'tis so funny, is'nt it, Miss Wilmot? Now wouldn't you all like to hear the rest of it?" appealing to the company at large.

Mr. Mc Alpine replied to the question by a look of the most ineffable contempt. He deemed laughing one of the seven deadly sins against Romance and gentility, his two favourite divinities: and, as he never felt inclined to indulge in it himself, af-

firmed that no one who had either head or heart ever did.

"What a soulless creature that Barham must be to laugh as he does; don't you think so, my fair enchantress," said he, still staring and looking tender at his victim, poor Isabel.

"It is very happy for him to be able to laugh," she answered, half crying from vexation.

"Come, come,– the story, the story—you like it, don't you, Lady Anne?" cried Barham.

Lady Anne, from politeness, and Mr. Wilmot, from good-nature, always seemed to enjoy what amused others; they had, therefore, listened as attentively to Father John's adventure as if they had not heard it a dozen times before; and now placidly awaited its conclusion.

Father John proceeded thus:—"All the way coming back, I was thinking how I'd be even with Mrs. Priest for the thrick she

played me. The next morning, before I got up, a message from her to me, begging me to come and have a *collation* after mass, with herself and Father Costelloe.—She always gets share of his breakfast, for she'd go to the dickens for tay; God forgive her, poor woman; I guessed well enough the rason of her civility—'twas just to see how crest-fallen I'd look, after my fine jaunt for nothing; but I nicked her, as you'll see.—'How are you, Father John?' says she.—'Very well, thank you, ma'am,' says I. 'How did you lave poor Dan,' says she, putting a comical face on herself. 'I didn't see him at all,' says I. 'How's that?' says she. 'Because I wouldn't be let,' says I. 'How do you mane you wouldn't be let?' says she. 'Only just because Mrs. Wilson and the ministher were within-side, reading to him, out of a thract,' says I. 'Reading to him out of a thract,' says she; 'the Lord save us from all harm!' making the sign of the cross. 'Reading to him! out of a thract!'

cried Father Costelloe, who just then come down stairs from his devotions. 'The apostate! he deserves to be cursed from the altar!'—his face was all manner of colours, and swelled up the bigness of his body a'most. 'Och, then,' says I, 'you may keep your breath to cool your porridge, Mr. Costelloe; for if you were cursing him from Sunday morning till Saturday night, he wouldn't care a pinch of snuff about yourself or your curses.' 'The bastely turncoat,' said Mrs. Priest, pouring out a cup of elegant strong tay for herself. 'Not care about me nor my curses!' cries Father Costelloe, mighty displeased. 'I request, sir, you'll spake more respectfully when you address your suparior.' 'How will ye have me spake respectful, when I'm spaking the way Protestants spake?' 'You were spaking of one of my flock, sir; you don't call them Protestants, I suppose,' says he, as mad as could be. 'Not all of 'em—only Dan Murphy; he's as black a new light as Mrs. Wil-

son, or the minister himself, by this time,' says I. 'I don't b'lieve any such thing,' says he. 'Oh very well, Mr. Costelloe, you needn't if you don't like.' So I said no more, but sat down to my collation. I was mighty fitagued after my duties that morning; but Father Costelloe was too mad to ate a bit. 'Pray what rasons did the turncoat give for his apostacy?' 'I wasn't let see him at all,' says I; 'but his wife tould me he turned partly because he liked the Protestants, and partly to spite us.' 'Spite *us!* What does that mean? He must mean to spite you, Mr. Molloy—Youv'e been negligent of your duty, sir.' 'Faith, I havn't, Mr. Costelloe; and 'tisn't me he means, but yourself, that's to say, Mrs. Priest.' 'Me!' says she, trembling, and turning as white as a sheet, for she's greatly in dread of displasing Father Costelloe, and no blame to her; 'What have I to do with a villian of his kind turning Protestant?' 'I don't know,' said I, 'whether he tells thruth or no, but

the rason he gives is that you refused a son of his liquor, on score; and himself and his son swore, by this and that, they'd be revenged on you and Father Costelloe, and cheat you out of his funeral.' 'You unfortunate woman!' said Father Costelloe, looking at her as if he would ate her up alive—and she shaking like a lafe. 'Oh! Father Costello, dear,' says she, 'forgive me this once. Oh! for the sake of ———' 'Go! this minute and ask Dan Murphy's pardon, and his son's, and tell 'em theyr'e welcome to every dhrop of liquor in your house, whether they pay for it or not.' If you seen the wry face she made, for she's the greatest skinflint, and the proudest and most concated woman in the parish, in regard of being married to the priest's nephew. 'Why don't you go at once?' says Father Costelloe. 'I'm waiting, sir,' says she, mighty mild, 'just to finish my drop of tay.' 'Your tay, woman,' says he, bouncing off his chair as if he was shot; 'if you don't go this minute,

bit nor sup, tay, nor mate, shall you ever have in my house. What's a drop of ditch-water of its kind, compared to my losing the best funeral in the parish, to say nothing of the poor man's soul, and all by your own fault?' So, away she went, laving her tay after her, and starving with the hunger, all the way to Dan Murphy's, on a pillion; and had to hire a man to sit before her, which vexed her well, I promise you. Nothing could equal the surprise of the Murphys when she began *pullalooing*, and crying *peccavi* for not giving them tick, and offering them every thing in her house for nothing. But when she began talking of Mrs. Wilson and the minister, they thought her going mad entirely; and when the murder came out, at last, back she came to us, fit to be tied, mad, outrageous. 'What made you,' says she, 'have the assurance to make a fool of me, Misthress Priest?' 'One good turn deserves another.' 'I'll tell Father Costello of you,' says she. '*I'll* tell Father

Costello of *you*,' says I; so there then it ended; and there ends my story—gentlemen and ladies, and I'm much endebted to you for your plasing attention."

"It is rather we who are indebted to you, sir," politely observed Lord Warringdon, "I assure you I have been much amused."

"Raally," observed Mc Alpine, to Isabel, "he ought to be ashamed to say so; a man of Lord Warringdon's habits and education should be suparior to finding amusement in the conversation of a man of no mind; he can have no mind himself."

"I beg your pardon, you happen to be mistaken, twice in a breath; replied Isabel, sharply, "father John has a strong brogue; but he has mind too; and as to Lord Warringdon, he has taste, as well as mind."

"Oh, I believe I must allow him to have taste; for on one point, at laste, we agree—that of admiring the same lady—

but, now, with respect to the other quaalification: a great dale depends upon what would be our different definitions of a man of mind; What would you define a man of mind to be?"

"Oh, I'm a bad hand at definitions." answered Isabel, carelessly.

"What a libel on you own intellectual powers!" cried Mr. Mc Alpine, "you that shine aqually in the flowery fields of the imagination, or the sublime heights of the understanding. Come now; you must not be afraid of me; and you must have a little more confidence in yourself:" he continued, tenderly encouraging her supposed timidity —"Come, fair Isabel, I'm waiting for your definition."

"A definition of what?" enquired Lord Warringdon, who, for the first time that evening, found an opportunity of seating himself near Isabel. He had more than once previously endeavoured to make his way to her, but had been constantly inter-

rupted *en route* by lady Anne, who always contrived, just on those occasions, to have something particular to say to him; he could not imagine how it all happened.

Are our readers more sagacious than his lordship? But, accustomed as he was, in all things, great or small, to have his own way, opposition, however unintentional, or accidental, irritated his impatience, and confirmed into determinate will what had originally been, perhaps, but a caprice. Each time, therefore, that lady Anne (even though but accidentally as he supposed) had intercepted him, he grew but still more resolved to accomplish his aim of the moment; in the meanwhile, he glanced at Isabel the oftener, because he could not at once make up to her; and thus noticed in her something of interest, which otherwise must have escaped him. He remarked her listless, pre-occupied air; he remarked that she never voluntarily addressed her companion, and that when

obliged, from politeness to reply to his observations, her eyes were directed to the floor, or to the ceiling, or to father John, or to Mr. Barham; to any, or every point, nay, flittingly to himself, in fact, rather than to the face of the person who was addressing her; and now the viscount's curiosity became augmented anew, and he watched her attentively.

It was evident that Isabel desired to be free of her companion; she did not, however, pout or toss her head, in manifestation of her feelings; an occasional contraction of her expressive brow alone betrayed her impatience of the constraint imposed upon her; indicating even vexation, only just so far as became one whose mind was as polished as her manners. For the first time Lord Warringdon looked with interest upon an unmarried woman, who was not an heiress. He had seen Isabel much more brilliant in beauty than upon that evening; but he had never *felt* her to be so loveable;

even those who have no feeling themselves are touched by an unconscious, delicate show of it in others, particularly when, as in the present case, the abstract quality is illustrated by a pretty face. No; never had he thought her eye-lashes so long and so dark as now, when he saw them almost reflected on a transparent cheek, pale from suppressed emotion. Nor had her light brown hair, which fell in rich natural clusters about her face and neck, ever appeared to him so luxuriant and beautiful as at present, when it shaded a countenance no longer lighted up by vivacity, and, (the better part of beauty,) the expression of a quick succession of thought—but breathing a gentle and unobtrusive pensiveness.

"What a pity," thought he, "to throw away so graceful a creature upon that brute!"

The look of delighted surprise with which Isabel started from her dull inertion, at the sound of his voice, when he came up, and

asked, as has been mentioned—"A definition of what?" and the radiant smile with which she welcomed him, were not lost upon so acute an observer of female nature as Lord Warringdon.

"Her cheek is not pale now," thought he, "nor does she turn away her eyes when she looks at *me*. Her look is, indeed, timid, but not avoiding."

Isabel felt that the words of his question were nothing—but its tone much. Isabel felt this, and her face beamed with joy and intelligence.

"The statue of Pygmalion," thought he, "warmed into life!"

But Isabel answered his question. "Mr. Mc Alpine insists on my defining a man of mind; the idea of asking a woman for a definition! to require us to imprison our vague, fleeting, impalpable, and often, as men say, irrational impressions, and imaginings within the limit of a cold, precise,

philosophical rule. I appeal to you, now, is it not unfair?"

"Mr. Mc Alpine, don't let her off," said Lord Warringdon, "a definition from her would be *impayable*—there would be such sweet—"

"Confusion! you were going to say," interrupted Isabel, laughing—"so I'll save you the confusion of finishing a sentence so courageously begun."

"No!" said he, "such sweet freshness and feeling, and—"

"Nonsense—" again interrupted Isabel. "But it is quite true, you must never expect anything precise, or raisonné, in our ideas. We are nothing but 'a bundle of sympathies,' you know, creatures who never think according to reason, but according to feeling: in one word, women think with their hearts."

"They could not think with anything half so good," rejoined Lord Warringdon—"*allons commençez.*"

Isabel laughed again, and shook her head. Mr. Mc Alpine was inexpressibly gratified at the change that had taken place in her manner, since Lord Warringdon had interrupted their tête à tête.

"She feels more at ase now, that she's no longer alone with me. How soon one can see when a woman raally loves—the very manes she takes to conceal her passion betrays it—come now," said he, in a tone half-tender, half-playful — "come, I insist on your definition; I'll not take the laste excuse."

Just at this moment, very much to Mr. Mc Alpine's annoyance, Maria joined the group—she had committed Mr. Barham to the safe guardianship of father John, her zealous ally on all occasions, and her indefatigable *proneur;* being, therefore, relieved, for a season at least, from such close application to her own interests, she was willing to dispose of a few moments' leisure to her sister's advantage.

"I wish," thought she, "that Mc Alpine would take himself off, and leave Warringdon and Isabel together;" and, aware of Mc Alpine's refined antipathy to the love of jesting, and ridicule of sentiment, she judged that her own presence would most effectually secure his departure.

"Well, good people," said she, "what high and weighty matters are you discussing here? Isabel, I see, is picking her glove to pieces, so I conclude she's the umpire chosen to decide on the contending opinions of Great Britain and Ireland. Now, my advice to you is, to say out at once, boldly, yes, or no, whatever may be the point at issue. Better to offend either or both, (your pardon, gentlemen,) than spoil a pair of Paris gloves."

"Your tariff of our worth is certainly highly flattering;" observed Lord Warringdon, smilingly.

"Oh! I don't profess to be polite:" replied Maria, "you must know I'm odd,

and odd people are never expected to be civil; and you can't think what a comfort that is. But come! what's the subject of your contestation? let us see if I can't settle it, as fairly and more fearlessly than Isabel. Love, politics, religion, or literature? under which of these four grand divisions of squabbling have you ranged yourselves for battle, heroes of white Albion and green Erin?"

"Our conversation has nothing to do with any of the topics you have enumerated; neither was it a dispute, but a discussion;" observed Mc Alpine, annoyed at Maria's jesting manner of treating all his favourite subjects: "your sister is going to oblige me (if you'll allow her to speak,) with her idaas of a man of mind."

"Well, Isabel—proceed, I entreat—I'm all attention;" said Maria, assuming an attitude of mock-gravity, which enraged Mc Alpine, but made Lord Warringdon laugh. "Come, Isabel," she ran on, per-

ceiving that her sister still remained silent, "enlighten us with your wisdom."

"Nonsense, Maria," said Isabel; "I have already told these gentlemen that I never could define any thing; and I'm quite tired of having to repeat the same thing so often."

"So you won't oblige me?" murmured Mr. Mc Alpine, in a tone of tender reproach.

"I did not think," observed Lord Warringdon, "you were so unpersuadable."

"What stupid creatures men are," resumed Maria; "you never can guess a woman's real motive for doing, or not doing, any one given thing. Here's my poor, guileless, innocent sister, accused of disobligingness by one gentleman, and of unpersuadableness by another, two most cruel and undeserved charges; for she is dying to oblige the one, and could be persuaded to anything by the other; while the motive for her silence is simply this: she

fears that her description of what she imagines to be an interesting man may not sufficiently appear a fancy portrait; and that, therefore, one or the other of you may think he discerns his own features in the *beau ideal* sketch of her imagination."

"I do wish," said Isabel, blushing very deeply and looking extremely offended; "I do wish, Maria, you would not speak as you do, without thinking; Mr. Mc Alpine, of course, knows you are only jesting; but Lord Warringdon will really think that—" she stopped abruptly, aware how ill-judged was any comment on Maria's speech, and how much consciousness of its truth her very anxiety betrayed. Maria, who never talked at random, had contemplated this very result; and, having attained it, and attracted Lord Warringdon's attention, she now stepped in to her sister's aid.

"Mr. Mc Alpine, since Isabel will not oblige you, I will. Now, I define a man of mind to be the man who has a mind for

me, and that's what I call a jewel of a definition;" she went on, mimicking father John's intonations.

Isabel and Lord Warringdon laughed, but Mr. Mc Alpine looked at her with ineffable disgust, as he muttered to himself—

"The idaa of any woman confessing such utter feminine degradation and want of sentiment! She's an abominable creature."—

But though Maria's jest upon so sacred a subject had displeased Mr. Mc Alpine, it delighted Mr. Barham; who, on hearing the laugh, came flying across the room to enquire its cause.

"Oh—bravo! oh! how well you do mimic Mr. Molly! 'tis so like;" and he sprang about the room in delight.

"What's that you're all laughing at?" enquired father John.

"Oh! something so droll, but I can't tell *you* what, because you might be cross."

"Not he!" cried Maria; "father John is never cross at anything *I* say or do; are you, father John?"

"Ah, you rogue, I guess well what you're doing; telling some diverting lie of me; but you're welcome," added he, looking kindly at his favourite; "you're welcome, whatever you say."

"He's very near it, is'nt he, Miss Wilmot?" asked Mr. Barham: "I'll tell him, shall I? yes I will. Miss Wilmot was giving an imitation of you, Mr. Molly; so like you'd have died yourself to hear her!" and he ran to join the priest.

"I wouldn't doubt her," replied the good humoured father John; "tisn't the first time she done it, I'll engage; no, nor it won't be the last time either."

"Did you hear what she said about the man of mind, Mr. Molly?"

"A man of what mind?" enquired father John.

"Oh, not a man of any particular

mind—only a man of mind in general, you know."

"Faith, I do not know," said father John.

Maria perceiving one gentleman could not understand, nor the other explain, took upon herself the office of interpreter. When she had done—

"Ha! ha! ha! upon my word, that's an excellent idea of a man of mind:" praised father John, shaking his plump sides.—"I'll tell you one thing, Miss Maria, —whoever has a mind for you, will shew he has sense, at any rate, to choose the pleasantest crature from this to yourself, whoever the others may be; that's what I call a fine, hearty, sinsible young woman:" he continued, turning to Mr. Barham—"one that says out at once whatever comes into her head, without throubling herself what any body thinks of her; and that's the girl for my money! and a pleasant crature;

always saying one droll thing or other, enough to make a corpse laugh."

"Well, do you know I thought she was very droll, though I never heard any one say she was reckoned so—I begin to understand Irish humour, I think, though I havn't been long here, yet; but is she as droll as you are, Mr. Molly?"

"Droll as me, is it? Troth she is, and far droller than ever I will be."

"But has she such nice stories as that about the funeral, Mr. Molly? I wish you'd mention what stories she does tell—will you?"

"I don't remember, upon my word, exactly, at the present moment, any story of her's, in perticklar; but, indeed, I nearly lost my life by a joke of hers onct."

"Oh, did you?" exclaimed Mr. Barham, in ecstasy;—"do tell me how?"

"I was ating a potaty hot out of the pot, one day, below in the kitchen, and she came in, I forget for what, now; and she

began telling me some quare thing or other, and myself began to laugh; and, troth, the potaty stuck in my throat, and I had liked to be choked; and would never have ate a bit again, I'm sure, only she thumped me between the shoulders, and forced the potaty out of me."

"Oh, how funny!" cried Mr. Barham,—"how I wish I had been there!—I should have so liked to have seen you choking, Mr. Molly."

"I never seen the aqual of him for idiosy; he can't even call my own name right," muttered Father John. 'Troth, and if 'twould be the same to you, I'd rather you seen some one else choking."

"Oh! I dont mean, you know, that I should like you to be choked, in earnest; only it must have looked so funny to see you all black in the face, and Miss Wilmot slapping your back! What was it she told you that made you laugh so!"

"I forget, indeed, what it was! 'tis a good while ago, now."

"Well! a story of your own, then, Mr. Molly! Do pray tell me something funny."

"I hav'nt a funny story in the world, Mr. Barham, that I hav'nt told you already."

Poor Mr. Barham looked exceedingly disappointed.

"Well, the same over again!—Will you, Mr. Molly, if you please?"

"Ah! my God! was there ever any poor man so persecuted as I am, and all on account of the bad luck I had to tell him the thrick I played on Mrs. Priest! One would think I had nothing to do, from morning to nig'·t, but remembering funny stories to divart him. I wish I was in my bed out of his way. Miss Maria, my honey," cried he, "I want to spake to you a moment—whisper. This young man is killing me; I can't stand him any longer, my pet."

"Why, what is he doing, Father John?"

"Bothering me to death for funny stories, as he calls them."

"Well; can't you tell him some?"

"What else have I been doing all night? but, any how, I can't stop now, for I have to read my office before I go to bed, you know; and it's getting late; so God bless you;" and Father John stole quietly out of the room, to the great discomfiture of Mr. Barham:—Maria, the only person of the party who could supply the place of Father John, being engaged talking with Mr. Mc Alpine, Lord Warringdon, and her sister.—Aware, in fact, of Mc Alpine's horror of any thing savoring of a jest on any subject, but more especially on one of a poetical kind, she had sent back Mr. Barham to Father John's charge, on a quest for "funny stories," and indulged herself in allusions to them, purely for the purpose of scaring away Mr. Mc Alpine, and leaving Lord Warringdon and her sister tête à tête. But this was the more difficult to accomplish, as Mr. Mc Alpine had never been so pleasingly impressed with the "idäa of Isabel's attachment," as

upon that evening.—"Her constrained and timid manner when alone with me—her gaiety and animation when Warringdon joined us—her charming reluctance to define a man of mind, for fear I should penetrate her sacret, and who it was that rāalized her romantic idāa of perfection; and then, her sweet agitation at her sister's indelicate allusion to the rāal motive for her refusing to oblige me;—every thing conspires to give me the delightful assurance that I am fondly, tenderly, and devotedly beloved by this fascinating crature."—Such was the tenor of Mr. Mc Alpine's cogitation, as he arose to effect his escape from the coarseness and vulgarity of Maria's conversation.

"I am going to lave you for a moment," he said to Isābel; and, accompanying this announcement, at once afflicting and consolatory (inasmuch as the intimation of his departure was softened by the assurance of his speedy return), by a look of mingled triumph and tenderness, at the one sister,

and of unmingled and unmeasured abhorrence at the other—he dragged his lazy length across the room, and seated himself near Lady Anne, who welcomed him with one of her most seducing smiles, in which Mr. Mc Alpine read delight at his attention to her daughter, and a strong, though vain, effort to conceal that delight. Isabel and .d Warringdon also caught this expression of Lady Anne's countenance, and discerned another feeling mingled with it;—namely, displeasure towards Lord Warringdon, for having, by his *gaucherie*, interrupted the more than probable termination of Mr. Mc Alpine's assiduities, that evening; and also against her daughter, for having preferred a flirtation with one gentleman, to a declaration from the other. And now, for the first time in his life, Lord Warringdon beheld a mother angry, and a daughter frightened, at his assiduities;—for Isabel grew pale and constrained as she had previously done, when talking with, or rather

when talked to, by Mc Alpine, although the Viscount felt that the same cause did not now produce the similar effect. The conversation, hitherto so flowing and animated, became broken and spiritless.

"Your Father and I," he observed, after a pause of some seconds, "are going to ride to-morrow to a Mr. Molony's, who has votes—Will you come?"

"Maria will, I dare say."

"That is truly an Irish answer," he said, laughing. "I did not ask whether Maria would, but whether *you* would—No diplomatic subterfuges will avail you with me, however. I demand an honest answer;—Yes—or No— "

"No"—replied Isabel, laughing—but Lord Warringdon perceived that her laugh was affected, and also divined that, although she said the No, so courageously, her heart sunk because she dared not say—Yes.

"I thought you liked riding?" looking disappointed at her refusal.

"So I do," said she, trying to seem perfectly indifferent.

"It must be, then, that you don't like your proposed companions; which of them is the obnoxious person? Mr. Wilmot or myself?"

A slight tremor of her voice did not escape him, as she answered with affected carelessness,—"Neither one nor the other; my only motive for declining your invitation is, that it will not be in my power to accept it."

"So you won't come and *help* me, as you have done heretofore, to win the hearts of the men of ——? But I am quite in the black-book, I see; you'll neither speak to me, nor look at me, ever since the arrival of your mama's friend, the adoring, adorable and, doubtless, adored, Mr. McAlpine."

Isabel darted a look of indignant surprise at him, and, rising abruptly, left the room. In her look he read something more than astonishment, or even displeasure,

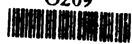
something that expressed, as distinctly as if she had given utterance to the feeling—"You are ungenerous in saying this; for you not only know perfectly well that I abominate Mc Alpine, but you also are aware that I like yourself."

Lord Warrington dreamt that night that he was in love with Isabel Wilmot, and when he awoke, he did not laugh at his dream.

"If she had a hundred or even fifty thousand pounds," thought he—*If* is a great peace-maker in love as well as war.—When a man or woman comes to an if, there are hopes or fears, as the case may be, that all is not sound "in the state of Denmark."

END OF VOL. II.

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